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N I N E
L E T T E R S

TO THE
REV. MR. JOHN HORSEY;

OR, AN ANSWER TO HIS
D E F E N C E

I N F A N T B A P T I S M.

By JOHN MARTIN.

The Law was given by MOSES, but Grace and Truth
came by JESUS CHRIST. JOHN 1. 17.

L O N D O N.

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M D C C L X X X V I.



LETTERS

TO THE

REV. MR JOHN HORSEY.

LETTER I.

REV. SIR,

WHEN you published your *Defence of Infant baptism*, you well knew that you wrote on a much controverted subject. You could not suppose, that your *Defence* would be decisive. You could not imagine, that your pamphlet would close the controversy. Such vanity you never indulged. Yet you enter the list of controversial writers,
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and attack the sentiments of your opponents, without making any apology. I commend you for it. No apology was expected. You have a right to state and defend your own opinion when you please. Have not we the same right? If you may thus attack, may we not reply? Shall I, then, solicit your pardon, because I make that attempt? I will not thus abase my own sentiments. I will not thus affront your understanding.

I have not, Sir, the pleasure of your acquaintance. All I know of you is by report; and by the printed paper before me. Report has not brought me any tidings of you, but what are in your favour: The controversy between us alone excepted. I am, therefore, under no temptation to treat you with personal disrespect. As an opponent, I may possibly make you feel. And I suppose I shall. For who can be opposed without feeling the least emotion? But you will recollect, our feelings were not consulted, when you published your *Defence of Infant baptism*. If, however, you only feel what I have felt, you will sleep in peace, and wake without vexation.

What you have now given to the public, was I find, delivered in the Meeting-House of the Rev. William Bennet, on the pavement, Moorfields, London, at the baptism of his child; and afterwards printed at the request of many who heard it. When you delivered what you are content to call, this plain Discourse, Mr. Bennet, as a pastor and

a parent, was disposed to devote his child to God by the ordinance of christian baptism: so you speak of the act of that day; which Sir, you had the honour to perform. The reason assigned for Mr. Bennet's appearance in *public* on this occasion, is, that he might be "a *model* for the imitation of his friends and stated hearers." In a situation so respectable, on a business of such importance, decorum demanded a soft address. Attentive to the feelings of others, you thus availed yourself of Mr. Bennet's partiality in your favour. "Nothing could reconcile me to engage in this service, but his own immediate request, upon the ground of particular intimacy and friendship: an apology, which I certainly ought to make to venerable FATHERS and respected BRETHREN in the ministry." (P. 1.)

Why should either our sincerity or understanding be called in question when we happen to make a polite apology? Yet even you, Sir, are not wholly exempted from censure. For some will have it, that a man of Mr. Bennet's prudence, acting as he was then disposed to act, would never have requested Mr. Horsey to stand up in favour of Infant baptism, and as a public Defender of that practice, merely on the ground of private friendship. They say, a regard to a numerous audience, to venerable fathers and respected brethren, would not permit him to sacrifice to private friendship what was only due to a man of distinguished abilities. They add, That you had

tried your talents on this controverted subject in a course of Lectures at Northampton, for the edification of your own people. And they scruple not to assert, That had you not acquitted yourself with distinguished applause on that trial, you would not have been placed in that painful state of pre-eminence which made the preceding apology your duty.—But to all this, I reply, That modesty forbade your being more explicit. And I see not how you could have acted, in this matter, more prudently: unless, indeed, you had made no apology at all. And since these exordiums are of doubtful issue, I beg leave to ask, Whether, as ministers of the gospel, it would not better become us to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, and to leave such apologies to those preachers who are not so employed?

Your *Defence of Infant baptism* is confined to three Propositions. In the *first*, you propose to state your views of the NATURE of christian baptism. In the *second*, to justify the administration of it to INFANTS. In the *third*, to vindicate the MODE of administering of it, by sprinkling or pouring water on the subject. (P. 1.)

To each of your Propositions, and the arguments by which you attempt to support them, I have given repeated attention. The result of which, without flattery, and without unmanly fear, I purpose to lay before you in ~~my~~ letters. That purpose I now pursue.

Yours

Before

Before you indulge us with your definition of Infant baptism, that we may give it I presume, due reception, we are entertained with previous hints. But ere I make any quotations from your Defence on that subject, let me, once for all, observe, That when I quote any thing from your Discourse abruptly, without due form of introduction, I have not any other view in this than to cut off those superfluous words, which in controversy would be tedious. And, Sir, to you, a circuitous form of expression is the more unnecessary, as you will easily distinguish, by the marks which I have used, your own words for mine. Whenever those marks are omitted, and I only give the *sense* of what you have said, do me the justice to believe, I still have the same end in view; namely, to avoid a multiplicity of words where a few are found sufficient. And if, by so doing, I should mistake your meaning, (which I have done my best to prevent) you may be confident, that I have never *designed* to misrepresent it.

You begin, Sir, this controversy by saying, “ It appears, indeed, that baptism, or washing with water, was practised as a religious rite, before the commencement of christianity.” (P. 2.)—To whom does this appear? One would imagine, by your mode of expression, that what you have asserted is self evident. I wish, Sir, with all my heart, that they who fancy they are quick sighted, were constantly cautious. Then, when any thing not

visible to others, occurred, they would not content themselves with saying, "It appears, indeed;" but would either be silent, or labour to inform us how we might see, what they had discovered. But, I am afraid, Sir, what follows, will do no credit to your sagacity. When our Lord submitted to baptism at the hands of John, he "significantly observed, that he did it, in order to fulfil all righteousness." (P. 2.) He did so. But whether you know the meaning of that significant expression, I must, at present, be allowed to doubt. Of all that were under the law, "there was none righteous, no, not one." Christ alone excepted. The moral law requires personal, perfect and perpetual obedience. And, in case of disobedience, it also requires the blood of the transgressor. It became Jesus, in saving his people from their sins, to fulfil *all* righteousness. And he did every thing which it became him to do. Neither the remonstrance of friends, nor the reproach of his enemies, diverted his attention from it a single moment. He became obedient to death. To the death of the Cross. He went on without intermission till he bowed his head, and said, *It is finished!* Such was the righteousness of the Mediator. In one thing, however, the righteousness of John and of Jesus Christ, perfectly corresponded. Each consisted in personal obedience to the will of the Father in the distinct, but very opposite characters which they sustained. But what has all this to do with subjects that cannot be obedient?

cient? or with an act which is no where commanded?

That our Lord submitted to be baptised at the hands of John, in order to fulfil all righteousness, (it being a part of that righteousness which he came to fulfil) is admitted. That this act of our Redeemer's submission, was "in conformity to a custom ALREADY IN USE." (P. 2.) is denied. What you affirm, you attempt to support by critical authority. Critics, it seems, have said, that the Greek word *ωσαναπα* conveys this meaning. But can you imagine, that Critics, not so much as named, nor any passage produced from these nameless Authors to confirm the propriety of their remark, can you Sir, imagine, that such a hint should ever produce the desired conviction? For my own part, when any word of scripture occurs in controversy, on which the strength of any argument is supposed to depend, I care not what meaning Critics or Commentators have conveyed by that word; unless the text and context, (being attentively considered,) will fairly support their opinion.

Lexicons, Dictionaries and Expositions, though of great advantage, when we know how to use them, are often useless to men of understanding. It is well known, that the same word in different situations, may convey not only different, but opposite ideas. The intention, therefore, of the writer, or of him that speaks, must be constantly regarded, if we wish to obtain his meaning. And if we do not, what have we to do with

his words? What is it to me, in what sense Homer or Hesiod, Aristotle or Demosthenes, used such a Greek term, when I want to know in what sense it was used by Matthew or Mark, by Luke or John? Unless, indeed, they are speaking of the same subject, and have the same design in view.—A father gives a particular order to his son. I hear the son promise to *fulfil* it. But am I to consult Johnson's Dictionary, to know what the *son* meant by the word *fulfil*? I had much rather reflect on the nature of the given order, and consider the ability and disposition of the young man, if it be worth my while to obtain further satisfaction. He who is duly attentive to these principles, will be wiser than the learned can be without familiar attention. For a proper application of common sense, without learning, is of greater value than what is commonly called learning ever is, when it is not exercised on the principles of common sense.

The word *πληρῶσαι* which you have quoted from Matt. iii. 15. occurs again Matt. v. 17. That verse is thus translated. "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but, *πληρῶσαι* to fulfil."—On this text Mr. Parkhurst observes, That *πληρῶσαι* must "be here taken in its most *extensive* sense, as denoting, that Christ came not only to *fulfil the types and prophecies*, by his actions and sufferings, but also to perform *perfect obedience* to the law of God, in his own person, and *fully to enforce and explain* it

"it by his doctrine." See Mr. Parkhurst's Greek and English Lexicon under the word Πάροω.

But is the fulfilment of types and prophecies the same thing as complying with *a custom already in use*? Besides, out of many customs, you leave us to guess which it was the Redeemer selected, and how far his conformity to that custom was carried. But it was not convenient, I believe, that in this part of the controversy you should be too particular. Vague and general assertions are the borrowed garments of error. Clothed in particular and proper expression, she would appear like herself; and when she does, she excites disgust.

To fulfil, is to fill up; to complete; which includes the idea of punctual and perfect obedience. Now, if Christ fulfilled the ceremonial law, it is by him abolished. If he fulfilled the moral law for justification, in him only who fulfilled it, can we be justified. We are, then, complete in him. To what end? That we might have communion with him, and be obedient to him. On these principles, we reject idle and endless conjectures on Jewish customs, and say, *One is our Master, even Christ*. The voice of the Shepherd we wish to hear. The voice of a stranger, we will not follow. And are we, think you, to be blamed for this resolution?

You admit, Sir, that when Christ was baptized, "it was in obedience to the authority of a divine institution." (P. 2.) Should we not, then, in this respect, be followers of Christ? Is your custom already

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ready in use of *such authority*? Do not trifle with us. Tell us plainly, since you speak of a particular custom, which among the many you have in view.

“ The deputies from the Jewish Sanhedrim expressed no surprize at John’s baptizing, as though the practice itself was NEW OR UNPRECEDENTED, but only enquired into the qualifications of the administrator; why dost THOU in particular baptize?” (P. 2.) To this conjecture, the best name I can bestow on such a proof, I beg leave to observe, That if John’s practice was not new or unprecedented, it could neither have excited curiosity or jealousy among the Rabbies. For John was not only a *Levite*, but of the house of *Aaron*; and in the eighth class of the twenty four, which David had settled in that illustrious family. Let it be also observed, that as there were many Levites called by the name of *John*, to distinguish the son of Zacharias from the rest, he was called, *John the Baptist*, being the *first* and *only* Levite who baptized. I add, had profelyte baptism been common, or so much asknown among the Jews, it is absurd to suppose, that when John baptized, they should have imagined, that the administrator ought to be some extraordinary person. Yet their question to John, strongly shews they were fixed in that opinion. For they said to him, “ Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John i. 25.” Observe, They ask, “ Why baptizest thou?” *indefinitely*. Not, why baptizest thou *the seed of Abraham*?

ham? Now, any religious act that put the posterity of Abraham, on a level with any other penitent, was certainly novel, and had it not been from heaven, and not of man, it must have met with universal rejection from Jewish Zealots. But we are told, those who did reject it, rejected the counsel of God against themselves. When our Lord asked this question, "The baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" he must have exposed himself to censure, had he not known it was impossible for them to deny the divinity of John's mission. This left them without excuse. And indeed, what excuse to make for you, who have asserted in the face of this remarkable passage such strange things, I cannot imagine. On this question, the Chief Priests and Scribes, and the Elders, reasoned with themselves, saying, "If we shall say from heaven," (that is, if we shall admit the baptism of John is evidently or immediately founded on Divine Authority) "he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, of men, they feared the people: for all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed, Mark xi. 31, 32." How is it, Sir, that you have less fear of the people than those Chief Priests, Scribes and Elders? John is yet a prophet indeed, in the eyes of thousands. Nor will they hear of his taking up a custom already in use, or admit that Christ commanded him thus to dignify a Rabbinical tradition.

" Divers

“ Divers washings, or baptisms, every one knows, were used in the Jewish Church,” (P. 2.) On this subject, Sir, our knowledge, perhaps, exceeds your approbation. We know, that what you seem to refer to, were “ carnal ordinances, imposed on “ them *until* the time of reformation, Heb. ix. 10.” We know, that while these carnal ordinances were in force, and even complained of as a burden, that vain and almost endless traditions were added by superstitious and self righteous Pharisees. Whether that custom for which you contend be of the former, or of the latter kind, who can determine? If of the latter, it is contemptible. If of the former, it is abrogated. For the ceremonial law was *unto* Christ. After his decease it vanished away. On a different ground, however, there yet remains *One Baptism*. And founded, as it is, not on indefinite custom, but on his authority, who has “ All power in heaven “ and in earth,” it will remain, as it is declared it shall, to the end of the world. Nor can it be said, that by the end of the world, we are to understand the end of the Jewish dispensation. That period passed away on the Ascension of the Son of God. And since the demolition of the Temple, and the final dispersion of the Jews, it is but a faint shadow of former shadows that now remains, or indeed that can remain, with the scattered remnants of that unhappy people. Their yet remaining fondness for fleeting shadows, childish ceremonies and carnal customs,

customs, we can well account for. But Sir, that you, a minister of the gospel, in the eighteenth century, that you should indulge a judaizing disposition so far as you have in this dispute, is much to be lamented.

Particular customs, in a law sense, are, all of them, of uncertain origin. So that, if any one can shew the beginning of any custom, it is not a good one. It is not so in the church of Christ. Positive institutions may be well accounted for. Your custom, is not of this cast. For when, or where, or how it first prevailed, I presume, you cannot tell. On the contrary, Believer's baptism is founded, if I may so express it, on the statute law of heaven. It is a plain and positive institute of Divine appointment. Its commencement is not, like fiction, concealed in clouds. We can tell from whence it is. Where and by whom it was first administered. To what subjects, and for what end. See Matt. iii. and Matt. xxviii.

Mr. Henry, when he did not recollect the consequence of his own argument, wrote well on the nature of positive institutes. He says, "Corruptions that are crept into any ordinance of God, must be purged out by having recourse to the primitive institution." "If," says he, "the copy be vicious, it must be examined and corrected by the original. Thus when St. Paul would redress the
"griev-

"grievances in the church * of Corinth, about the
 "Lord's Supper, he appealed to the appointment,
 "1 Cor. xi. 23. So and so *I received it from the*
 "*Lord.* Truth was from the beginning; we must
 "therefore inquire for *the good old way*, Jer. vi. 16.
 "and must reform, not by later patterns, but by
 "ancient rules". So speaks Mr Henry, in his com-
 ment on Matt. xix. 8. Feeling the force of truth,
 and not suspecting that the consequence of his own
 argument would strongly militate against a favorite
 sentiment, thus he spake. But to you, Sir, he
 speaks in vain. For, however the ordinance of
 baptism may be, and actually is, by some, corrupted,
 it is in vain to say to you, *From the beginning it was*
not so. Since when it began, or where, by what
 person, or for what end, who can discover, by any
 thing you have been pleased to say on this sacred
 subject?

Your thoughts of an ancient custom, abstract-
 edly considered, might amuse me. When, with-
 out any proof, you make "the Governor of the
 "christian church," adopt and dignify your fa-
 vorite

* Mr Henry ought to have said in the Church *at*
 Corinth. Every particular Church mentioned in the
 New Testament, is congregational, and was *at* such a
 place as is there mentioned. We speak with propriety
 when we speak of the church of Christ. But the church
 of *Corinth*, of *Rome*, of *England*, of *Scotland*, or of any
 other *city* or *country*, is an improper and injurious mode
 of expression.

vorite custom, without informing us what custom in particular he thus revered, I am displeased. When you contend, we are thus to understand his language in Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. (P. 2.) I am surprized and offended. Believe me—That which is straight can no more be made crooked, than that which is crooked can be made straight.

Perhaps, Sir, what a Commentator, so justly celebrated as Vitringa, has said of carnal ordinances under the Sinai covenant, may claim your attention. Consult him on the 6th, 7th and 8th verses of the 40th chapter of the prophécy of Isaiah. On these memorable words, “ All flesh is grass, and all the
“ goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.
“ The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because
“ the spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the
“ people is grass.” Vitringa observes, that these words contain, not only a prediction of bringing into a state of contempt all the unstable, frail and pernicious wisdom of the flesh in the Gentile world, but also, of the utter abolition of the carnal ordinances in the Jewish Church.

This, I think, is a fact: and therefore, I cannot believe, that the Governor of the christian Church would *revive* a custom of carnal complexion. Believing this fact, I think, with Vitringa, that the following passages refer to this important event.
“ What shall we then say, that Abraham, our fa-
“ ther, as pertaining to the *flesh*, hath found, Rom. iv. 1 ?” “ Wherefore, henceforth, know we
no

no man after the *flesh*, 2 Cor. v. 16." "Are ye
 "so foolish, having begun in the spirit, are ye now
 "made perfect by the *flesh*? Gal. iii. 3." "Though
 "I might also have confidence in the *flesh*. Cir-
 "cumcised the eighth day,"—and so on. "But
 "what things were gain to me, those I counted
 "loss for Christ, Philip. iii. 4—7." "There
 "arise another priest—Who is made, not after
 "the law of a *carnal* commandment, but after the
 "power of an endless life, Heb. vii. 15, 16."—If
 those quotations, Sir, should strike you, as they do
 me, you, will rejoice, That though "the grass
 "withereth, and the flower fadeth," yet, "the
 "word of our God shall stand for ever." Of this
 joy the Apostle partook when he said, "For we are
 "the circumcision, which worship God in the spi-
 "rit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no con-
 "fidence in the *flesh*, Philip. iii. 3."—Of this joy,
 may you drink deeply, with increasing satisfaction!
 So with sincerity prays, your respectful humble
 servant,

March 24, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

REV. SIR.

TURNING from shadows to substance, from flesh to spirit, from the Mosaic law to the gospel of the Son of God, I closed my last letter with christian benevolence; and with transient relief from that toil, which your *Discourse* and my inclination to review it, have imposed upon me. But again, I perceive, I must enter into the shades, if I persevere in my intended reply. Safely however, at last, may I, and you too, emerge from every shade, and rise superior to every ceremony, which has any tendency to obscure the glory of the gospel from us, or to prevent our entire dependence on Jesus Christ!

From feeble hints you proceed to full description. Thus you describe the subject in debate: "Christian Baptism thus circumstanced, then, appears to be, " A SACRED ORDINANCE, WHEREBY THE SUBJECT IS DEDICATED TO THE GOD OF THE " CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND REGULARLY SET " APART TO THE HONORS AND OBLIGATIONS " OF THAT DISPENSATION." (P. 3.)

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On this definition, or description rather, of baptism, I would in general observe; That only is a sacred ordinance, which is expressly revealed in the word of God; and revealed under that œconomy in which it is to be administered. Who are to officiate, and who are to submit to a sacred ordinance, are not left to conjecture: a deviation from this written rule, and, from the practice of those intelligent and faithful servants, whom it is our duty to follow, is not to be defended. A christian minister has no authority from Christ to dedicate children to God. We are priests to God, to offer spiritual sacrifices; and, that "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks might be made for all men:" but it does not appear to me, that we have either authority or ability, to dedicate or devote any person to the Almighty; if by so doing, something distinct from supplication, and which prayer does not include, be intended. The God of the christian religion some will think an odd mode of expression. Because the God of Abraham and our God, is undoubtedly, the same Jehovah. Regularly setting an infant apart, to the honors and obligations of the present dispensation, is, I fear, presumptuous. Who that reflects on the spirituality of those honours, and of those obligations, would talk of *regularity* in this irregular and rash proceeding?

In every controversy where truth is opposed, there is, what the acute Stapferus has called a *πρωτον ψευδος*, a primary error. In that part of the debate between

us,

us, which relates to the proper subjects of baptism, your leading error, to which the rest may be reduced, seems to be, *a misapprehension of the visible kingdom of Jesus Christ*. You are ever in quest of some analogy between the external appearances of the present dispensation, and that of the Sinai Covenant. You seem continually to forget, that the middle wall of partition is thrown down, and are perpetually running back to Horeb for divers washings, running water, and sprinkling priests; or to avail yourself of circumcision, or of some antient custom, which you are solicitous to establish; because you think it has been adopted and improved by the governor of the christian church. (P. 2.) But let me intreat you to recollect the following declarations of our Lord and Master: "My kingdom is not of this world. John 18. 36." "Believe me the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit, and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit, and in truth. John iv. 21, 23, 24."—Were these declarations treated with due deference, our dispute would be decided. When this controversy is out of sight, who can surpass many of the brethren, of your own denomination, in their excellent comments on these important expressions? But, when baptism is the principle sub-

ject of their discourse, what a change! Clouds and shadows then obscure their comment, and if we are not disgusted, we are sure to be disappointed.

After your description of Infant baptism, thus you proceed. "It, [baptism] is the first formal rite
 " enjoined by that religion to which it belongs, and
 " therefore called an ordinance of INITIATION.
 " The subject is dedicated thereby to God, under
 " the distinct characters of Father, Son, and Holy
 " Spirit. And it farther appears, from the lan-
 " guage of the commission, to be the formal badge,
 " or appointed token, of the christian religion,
 " whereby the subjects of it are discriminated or
 " distinguished from others; entitled to the HO-
 " NORS of the christian dispensation; and obli-
 " gated to OBEY its rules. Hence we read of those
 " who were baptized into Christ, and are therefore
 " said to have put on Christ: i. e. they are for-
 " mally invested with the christian name, and are
 " under the regulations of the christian religion. A
 " person baptized is thereby regularly set a part,
 " under a determinate name or title. He is, in an
 " external sense, *christianized* or *christened*.—By
 " this ceremony, however, he is not admitted into
 " any *particular* church, or religious society; but
 " set apart as a visible subject of Christ's king-
 " dom at large. And farther, this rite by no means
 " ascertains to the subject SPIRITUAL and SAVING
 " blessings; he is hereby marked out, only as a child
 " of

“ of the kingdom; not, in the highest sense, a child
“ of God.” (P. 3. 4.)

I thought it a pity, Sir, to disunite what you have thus united. Ideas more oddly associated, surely are seldom seen. Instead of a grave reply; for who can be grave in reading the preceding paragraph? permit me to indulge the following suppositions. First, let me suppose that Master Bennet will live to read your Discourse. While he is yet young, and has read nothing better on baptism, let me further suppose, that I should be permitted to ask him the following questions, and should receive from your pupil, the answers which I am going to introduce.—I confess such an interview is improbable. But were it to take place, at a certain period, and had the child no suspicion of my design, it is probable we should thus chat together.—You have read, Master Bennet, Mr. Horsey’s pamphlet on Infant baptism. “ Yes, Sir, often.”—Then you can tell me what he means by Infant baptism. “ Yes, I
“ can. By Infant baptism, Mr. Horsey means Infant sprinkling, or the sprinkling of Infants.”---And what is infant sprinkling? “ It is christian baptism.”---And what else do you call it? “ It is a formal
“ rite. The first formal rite, Sir.”---And what else? “ It is an ordinance of initiation.”---And what else? “ It is a formal badge.”---And what else? “ It is
“ an appointed token.”---And what else? “ It is
“ a ceremony.”---Well my dear, you have not a bad memory. Perhaps, you can also tell me what In-

fant sprinkling, or your being sprinkled when an infant, did for you. "Yes, I can."---Do, then. "Why, by it, I was *christianized*."---Then you were not born a christian, though born of christian parents? "No, Sir, I was not a christian 'till I was *christened*."---Very good. But what else did this *christening* do for you? "Why, Sir, I was thereby dedicated to God."---By whom? "By Mr. Horsey."---Indeed!---Was any thing else done for you. "Yes, I was thereby discriminated or distinguished from others."---How so? Did it leave any mark on your body? "No, I believe not. But what it might do at first, I cannot tell."---Is this all?---"No, it entitled me to the HONORS of the christian dispensation."---Ah! my dear, take care how you admit that sentiment. The real honours of the christian dispensation, are spiritual and eternal. Nor can we have any title to those honours, but by the special donation of the Son of God.---But go on.---"It laid me under an obligation to OBEY its rules."---Then you were *something after being sprinkled*, which you were not *before*. "Yes; Before I was sprinkled, I was not a *christian*. But after that act, I was *christianized*. Before I was sprinkled, I was not baptized *into Christ*. After that act I was. Before I was sprinkled, I had not *put on Christ*. In that act, I put on the Lord."---Why, my dear, how can this be, since when you were sprinkled, you did nothing, nor even knew what was done to you? "O Sir, the meaning is this. I was
 " formally

“formally invested with the christian name, and
 “brought under the regulations of the christian religion: for, I was regularly set apart, under a determinate name or title.”---Are you then a member of any *particular* church? “No, Sir.”---Or of any *religious* society? “No.”---Where are you then? In what is commonly called the *world*? “No, Sir, I am a visible subject of Christ’s kingdom at large.”---At large, indeed! But if a *visible* subject of the kingdom of Christ, does not that, and all you have mentioned, give you some right to spiritual and saving blessings? “No, Sir, none of these things do by any means, ascertain to me those blessings. For, I am marked out, only as a child of the kingdom; I am not, Sir, in the highest sense, “a *child of God*.”---God grant, my dear, you may live to be *born again*, and to surmount the prejudices and perplexities of your present education, on what you are taught to call Infant baptism!

What can you mean Brother Horsey, by teaching a poor child to talk in this manner? what can you mean by what you have said, and unsaid, of Infant baptism? You seem to play with it, as a boy sometimes plays with a tennisball. He throws it down with force, on purpose to make it mount on high. Yet he knows it cannot long continue there. Down again it falls. Only by force it is made to rise for a few moments from its original situation. I wonder you are not wearied with similar diversion.---You know, Sir, that the kingdom of our Lord, is a spiritual

tual kingdom. You know, that its nature, promises, honors and obligations, are spiritual. You know, that its subjects, worship, weapons of warfare, present and future blessings, in short, every thing, that is a real part of this admirable kingdom, is truly spiritual. Why then, is this concealed to serve so poor a purpose, as you have ventured to pursue. Of the kingdom or church of Christ, you must permit me to introduce occasional remarks. In taking this liberty, I keep two ends in view. *One* is, to unite if possible, edification with contention. The *other* inducement is this, That as misapprehensions of the kingdom of our Lord, lie at the *core* of this controversy, these remarks may be useful; they cannot be deemed digressions from the subject in debate.

Dr. Erskine*, though a pædobaptist, speaks with peculiar freedom of the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ: nor does he seem to care how much it militates against his own practice, in respect of Infant baptism. His words are, "The church and the body
 " of Christ are synonymous expressions, 1 Cor. xii.
 " 12, 13. Eph. i. 23. iv. 16. Col. i. 24. It is
 " evident, that, in these passages, the apostle speaks of
 " the true mystical body of Christ. For we are told
 " 1 Cor. xii. 13. that by one spirit we are all *bap-*
 " *tized* into one body. And that from Christ, the
 " whole body fitly joined together, and compacted
 " by that which every joint supplieth, according to
 " the effectual working in the measure of every part,
 " maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying
 " of

* See his Theological Dissertations, P. 75.

“ of itself in love, Eph. iv. 16. It is equally
 “ plain, that the apostle speaks of particular visible
 “ churches, reaping benefit from the various gifts of
 “ their teachers. Therefore, every particular visible
 “ church, was considered by the apostles, as com-
 “ posed only of true believers: and those not
 “ baptized with the holy Ghost, were accounted by
 “ them, no members of Christ’s mystical body.
 “ What then shall we say of those, who in all their
 “ actions are animated and influenced by the devil,
 “ who live after the flesh, and retain nothing of
 “ the christian, *save the empty name*? Christians are
 “ as lively stones, built up a spiritual house, an
 “ holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices,
 “ acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5.
 “ And is that, think you, the character of men dead
 “ in trespasses and sins?” So far the Doctor. Suf-
 fer me to ask, (That if every particular church, was
 considered by the apostles, as composed only of true
 believers; and if those that were not baptized with
 the holy Ghost, were accounted by them, no mem-
 bers of Christ’s mystical body) whether it can be said
 with truth, that Infants are *visible* subjects of
 Christ’s kingdom at large?

These expressions, “ baptized into Christ, put on
 “ Christ,” I acknowledge we read of in the New
 Testament. But with your *hence*, and *therefore*,
 (P. 3.) how is the apostle’s meaning perverted.
 Can you believe that he spake of children when he
 made use of those *expressions*? You make an Infant’s
 being

being *christianized*, and it's being *christened*, the same thing. (P. 3.) And by so doing, you remind me of a late act of parliament, in which we Dissenters, have the honor to lay a tax upon ourselves and on our posterity. In that act, the term *christening* is, by choice, inserted. I confess till then, I thought, I should have offended any protestant minister, (not of the church of England,) to have said that he *christened* children. That offence has now ceased. But the meaning of the term, I was yet to learn, till I read your Discourse. I now find, that, with you, to *christen* is to *christianize*. If so, what a pity, some may say, that every child in Great Britain is not *christianized*; seeing though this favor is not of *birth*, nor of *blood*, it is by the *will* of *man*. Should such pity be excited in any, a closer attention to your slender meaning, will cause it perhaps, to subside. For he will find, it is only "in an external sense," that you *christianize* by *christening*. And that when the deed is done, whether, (to use your own strange words,) whether the christened Infant be "an EMBRIO-ANGEL, or an EMBRIO-FIEND," you cannot tell. (P. 23.)

Dr. Erskine, when speaking of an external kingdom under the present Dispensation, says, "If
 " there is an external church, essentially different
 " from the internal, and consisting of different members, then, Christ has two churches in the world,
 " and is the head of two mystical bodies.—Of old,
 " indeed, God had two different kinds of people,
 " the

“ the natural descendants of Abraham, and his
 “ spiritual seed: Jews outwardly, and Jews in-
 “ wardly: those born after the flesh, and these by
 “ the promise. But now, the slaves of sin, are no
 “ more a part of God’s family, John viii. 35. Those
 “ born after the flesh, are cast out of the church,
 “ Gal. iv. 23—30: And he only is Abraham’s
 “ seed, and a Jew, in the New Testament sense of
 “ the word, who is one inwardly; walking in the
 “ steps of the faith of Abraham, and doing his
 “ works, John viii. 39. Heb. ii. 16. Rom. ii.
 “ 28, 29. iv. 12. ix. 6, 8.”—How, Sir, you
 will be able to confute this acute writer in the pre-
 ceding quotation, or how, either he, or you, can
 reconcile these remarks with Infant sprinkling, as
 an act of divine worship, you, perhaps, may guess,
 but I cannot.

You invite your reader to review the commission
 in Matt. xxviii. 19. 20. and to observe, whether
 it does not agree with that account which I have
 quoted from the 3d and 4th page of your *Defence*.
 I accept, Sir, your invitation. And having so done,
 “ I desire you to consider, that if any law or com-
 “ mission, does enjoin, and particularly mention
 “ two or more things to be done, the said law or
 “ commission, does equally oblige to the perform-
 “ ance of *each* of those things, and render one as ne-
 “ cessary and indispensable as the other; unless there
 “ be some particular exception to the contrary.
 “ Thus Judges, for instance, are empowered and
 obliged

“ obliged to try and give judgment, in such and
 “ such causes. If they only hear them, they don’t
 “ discharge their duty; but are equally obliged to
 “ determine and give sentence according to law.
 “ For the authority which obliges to *one*, is equal
 “ in its obligation with respect to the *other*.—Now,
 “ since the commission to baptize, mentions *teach-*
 “ *ing* as well as *baptizing*, without making any dis-
 “ tinction, or saying any thing of *one*, which is not
 “ said of the *other*; therefore, this commission does
 “ equally oblige both to *teach* and to *baptize*. And
 “ upon this principle, the commission under con-
 “ sideration, cannot comprehend Infants. For the
 “ words do necessarily oblige to teach all whom they
 “ intend should be *baptized*. And this teaching,
 “ must always as necessarily *precede* their being bap-
 “ tized. Both which articles do very plainly ex-
 “ clude Infants; because they are not capable of
 “ being taught at all.—Let it be farther observed,
 “ that the only subjects spoken of, are *all Nations*.
 “ The things said of these subjects are, that they
 “ must be *taught*, and that they must be *baptized*.
 “ Now, both these being said of the same subjects,
 “ we may form the words into these two proposi-
 “ tions; for they are virtually two; *viz. Teach*
 “ *all Nations*, and *Baptize all Nations* ---How, then,
 “ can you persuade yourself, contrary to the express
 “ words of the scripture, that some only are to be
 “ taught, whilst others may as well be baptized
 “ without any instruction at all? Since, then, the
 com-

" commission, leaves no room, in the least, for any
 " distinctions, but speaks indifferently and univer-
 " sally of all; what it enjoins on one, it equally en-
 " joins on all; there remains only one of these two
 " extremes to be chosen; either that teaching must
 " *always*, or that it must *never* precede baptism."---
 " Nobody dare say, that *none* are to be taught before
 " they are baptized: this would shock every rational
 " enquirer, it is so gross and palpable an error, as
 " might be shewn from the nature of the thing, and
 " the order observed in the commission.---We see
 " therefore, that the pædobaptists themselves, will
 " not pretend they must *never* teach any before they
 " baptize them; but on the contrary, make it ne-
 " cessary, at least in some cases, *to teach first*. But
 " if it must be so in *some cases*, then, as I have be-
 " fore demonstrated, it must be so in *all*.

" To evade the force of all this, it has been an-
 " swered, and I must needs say ridiculously enough,
 " That Infants are to be taught likewise, *viz.* when
 " they come to age, and are capable of it; so that,
 " though the commission does require all who are
 " baptized, to be taught also, yet that does not ex-
 " clude Infants."

" But, in the first place, I have just now shewn,
 " that all must be taught before they can be re-
 " gularly baptized; and this unavoidably excludes
 " Infants. Secondly, supposing the commission
 " could allow of this comment, then it may run
 " thus: *Go teach all Nations, even Infants too when*
 " *they are grown up, &c. i. e. when they cease to*
 " be

" be Infants. This shift can be of no service. For
 " if the term *all Nations*, only means Adult-per-
 " sons, and Infants when grown up, the question
 " will be at an end, and we are agreed. 'Tis a
 " pretty odd distinction, indeed, but you shall have
 " it, if you please, and we will allow that Infants
 " when they are grown up, (that is, when they
 " come out of that ignorant state, and are no lon-
 " ger Infants, but Adult-persons,) may be bap-
 " tized. And if this will reconcile us, let us in-
 " stead of disturbing each other, unite hencefor-
 " ward in a common opposition of those enemies
 " to the sacraments of our most holy religion,
 " who dare wholly cashier and reject the ordi-
 " nance."---See Dr. Gale's *Reflections*, on Mr.
 Wall's *History of Infant Baptism*, P. 247---255.
 But observe, I have both abridged, and given a
 different turn to some of the Doctor's words in this
 long quotation.

Such, Sir, are my sentiments of the commission you
 have invited me to review, with the rest of your
 readers: sentiments which I embraced long before I
 saw Dr. Gale's *Reflections*. Whether these remarks,
 or your's best agree with the sense of that sacred pas-
 sage, I shall only say, *Consider*.

" Let it be observed, that the word which is
 " here translated *teaching* (*διδασκαλίας*) is different
 " from what was so rendered before (*μαθηματικαί*);
 " plainly intimating, that the same idea is not in-
 " tended; but, that the first word means, as I have
 " said

“ said *disciple*, and this properly signifies, *instruct-*
 “ *ing*, like a parent or master his children or scho-
 “ lars; evidently referring to the subsequent dis-
 “ courses of the Apostles, to be delivered in conse-
 “ quence of their baptism, to those who had been
 “ by that rite admitted into the school of Christ,
 “ or disciplined to him.” (P. 4.)

In my turn, let me intreat you to recollect, how many *pædobaptists*, learned as yourself, you venture to contradict by what you have said in the preceding quotation. Of what weight, then, can your assertion be, so destitute of proof, even with your own people? Out of the many to whom I have referred, I take the liberty to mention two. The first is Dr. Whitby, in his note on Matt. xxviii. 19. He, though fully aware, it would be said, he had yielded too much to the *Antipædobaptists*, observes, “ that *μαθηται*, here, is *to preach the Gospel to all Nations*, and to engage them to believe it, in order “ to their profession of that faith by baptism.” This, says the Doctor, seems apparent 1.) From the parallel commission, Mark xvi. 15. *Go preach the Gospel to every creature,—he that believeth, and is “ baptized, shall be saved.* 2.) From the scripture “ notion of a *disciple*, that being still the same as a “ *believer.*” Of which the learned Doctor produces striking instances, among the disciples of *Moses*, of *John the Baptist*, and of *Jesus Christ*; both before and after his resurrection. After his resurrection, he observes, “ all that believed on him, had no other
 “ name,

" name, for a season, but that of his *disciples*, Acts ix.
 " 1, 10, 19, 21, 38. As when it is said, the *dis-*
 " *ciples were multiplied*, Acts vi. 1, 2, 7. Though
 " afterwards, at *Antioch*, the disciples began to be
 " called *Christians*, Acts xi. 26."---And what sort
 of disciples they were, the context fully determines.
 They were such as *believed* and *turned* unto the
 Lord. Such as were exhorted, that with *purpose of*
heart they would cleave unto him. Infants, how-
 ever, were not called *Christians* at *Antioch*. To a
 distant city, and a darker day, we must have recourse
 for the origin of that injurious invention.---The
 other learned pædobaptist, I would quote on this
 occasion, is the venerable Venema. See Mr. Booth's
 pædobaptism examined, P. 319. Venema having
 produced the commission to baptize, from Matt.
 xxviii. 19, 20. says, " This is an excellent passage,
 " and explains the whole nature of baptism. Before
 " persons were baptized, it was necessary for them
 " to believe the preaching of the Apostles ; which
 " faith they were to profess in baptism. For the
 " word μαθητευσαι, in the stile of the New Testa-
 " ment, does not signify *barely to admit into a school*
 " *and instruction* ;" (which you have ventured to in-
 " sinuate it does, (P. 4.) but to admit, *after* the
 " doctrine is believed, and *after* a previous subjec-
 " tion to the fundamental laws of the school.
 " Μαθητευσαι τινα, is to *teach a person* effectually, so
 " that he may learn, obey, and receive the doc-
 " trine by faith. It includes, therefore ακουειν και μαθειν,
 to

“ to *hear*, to *understand*, and to *admit for true*;
 “ for *μαρτυρεω*, to *learn*, signifies an idea distinct from
 “ *ακουσαι*, to *hear*. Vid. Raphelius, ad. John vi.
 “ 45.”

To these learned brethren of your own, I beg leave to add, that if you have, and why should I doubt it, a *disposition* to consult the learned and laborious Dr. Gale, on the word in question, I think you will obtain complete satisfaction of the full meaning of that term, which, I take it for granted, you have not yet attentively considered. But as you may not have his Reflections at hand, I take the liberty to subjoin the following remarks. “ The
 “ word [*μαρτυρεω*, *teach*] in the baptismal commission
 “ of *Matthew*, is used only three times more in all the
 “ New Testament. *Every scribe* WHICH IS IN-
 “ STRUCTED [*μαρτυρευεις*] *into the kingdom of heaven*.
 “ Matt. xiii. 52. *Joseph who also himself* WAS JESUS’S
 “ DISCIPLE. Matt. xxvii. 57. [*μαρτυρουσι τω Ιησου*]
 “ *When they had preached the gospel to that city, and*
 “ HAD TAUGHT *many* [*μαρτυρουσαντες*] Acts xiv. 21.
 “ They did not barely *preach the gospel*, but *taught*
 “ so effectually as to *prevail* on many to become *dis-*
 “ *ciples*, or *believers*. This is the plain import of
 “ the original.---So that whereas *μαρτυρεω* implies
 “ *teaching*, full as much as the more common word
 “ [*διδασκω*] the difference is, that the former has a
 “ more precise and determinate meaning; conveying
 “ to the Apostles this idea, viz. *So teach the people*, as
 D “ to

“ to persuade them to become *my disciples*.” See a course of Letters to Bp. Hoadly, P. 78, 79.

That they who were baptized by the apostles, “ were afterwards gradually instructed in the grand truths of christianity---encouraged and fortified “ by its declarations and promises---and urged to a “ consistent performance of all its important duties,” (P. 4, 5.) we admit. And with us, from the day of baptism to the day of death, this practice is still continued. But that any person was ever baptized by any apostle of Jesus Christ, uninstructed in the leading truths of christianity, or not professing to believe them, this, Sir, is not admissible.---The gospel was published by the apostles to all nations, *for the obedience of faith*. Rom xvi. 26. Not *to all, in all nations*; But to all that were able to hear it. And as any, through grace, believed, he became obedient to the gospel. But where that divine report was not received, whether it was from a perverse disposition, or from natural incapacity, there neither was, nor indeed could be, that obedience which the gospel was published to promote.---“ If “ ye *love* me, keep my commandments, John xiv. “ 15.” This is the *order* that Christ has established. “ If any man love me, he *will* keep my words, “ John xiv. 23.” This is a *fact* which our Lord asserts. But, in Infant sprinkling, you are unmindful of these things.---Review, Sir, what you have written on this subject, and deliberately consider, whether, with all the applause which it is
said

said you have obtained from some, you have obtained it with unfulfilled satisfaction in your own conscience.

A traveller may be so situated on his journey, that, of three or four separating paths before him, he knows not which to choose. Travellers are of different dispositions. Some are full of conceit. Others are full of conjecture. Some are full of prejudice. Others are without any peculiar prejudice, in favor of any path; they only wish to find the right. And when they do, are determined though they should walk alone, to pursue it. In a mental and moral sense we are pilgrims and strangers. And in every thing that is practical, much depends on our *disposition*. We cannot go forward with safety, unless we are resolved to let the word of God be a lamp unto our *feet*, and a light unto our *path*. Long since I sought and obtained this resolution, in respect of believers baptism.

I saw much was said of baptism in the New-Testament. I heard different opinions relative to this positive institution. But it was indifferent to me, whether infants or adults were the proper subjects; whether sprinkling or immersion was the only mode. I believed, however, that truth was immutable; and that it could only be with one of the opposing parties. I read without prejudice; at least, in favor of my present practice. I prayed that I might know and discharge my duty. You know the consequence. But though I have been baptized,

on a profession of my faith, more than three and twenty years, I have never written any thing professedly on this subject. Bear with me, then, if I make haste slowly. Who can answer as concisely as others can assert? Be not offended with my freedom. For, notwithstanding the liberty I take as a disputant, you will find it is restricted to the nature and manner of your *Defence*. I do not doubt, were I to see some other production of yours, detached from this controversy, I should have as much to applaud as I have now to censure. I wish I may enjoy that pleasure. But if I never should, believe me to be, what I sincerely am, your respectful humble servant,

March 29, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

LETTER

L E T T E R III.

REV. SIR,

WHEN I call to mind the nature and the number of those contradictions which learned pædobaptist ministers have published in this controversy, I am at a loss to determine whether the conduct of the people among whom you labour, is to be censured or commended. Are your friends so intelligent, that however you, and other learned pædobaptists may contradict yourselves, by what you preach and by what you publish, they can, under every disadvantage, perceive what is duty? Or do they hear so much of rites and ceremonies, of antient customs and modern conjectures, that they prefer their own quiet to close investigation? Be which it may, your peace is connected with their patience. For should they once perceive, as with due search they would, that there is hardly one argument or one text, which you urge in favor of Infant sprinkling, which some of your brethren in the ministry, of equal learning and of equal reputation with yourself, does not abandon, the consequence would be unpleasing. If you value your
present

present peace, silence on this subject, will be your advantage. You have thought otherwise. What you may think in future, when you and your friends have pursued a little longer the method that now seems to be adopted, the effects of those united efforts will ere long determine.

Your *second* proposition is thus introduced.---

“ Having stated my views of the nature of christian baptism, I am, secondly, To justify the administration of it to INFANTS.” (P. 5.)

Our errors are seldom single. Because, we seldom assert what is erroneous, without attempting to justify that error. But what do you urge in justification of Infant baptism? That we do not read of the baptism of adult persons in the Acts of the Apostles? No, you admit of this fact, and that they required of some, “ previous to the ceremony, a *profession* of their faith and repentance.” (P. 5.) But you are “ apprehensive, that sufficient reasons may be given, why their baptizing the adult is distinctly mentioned, in perfect consistency with their baptizing CHILDREN, and a comparative silence respecting them.” (P. 5.) Had the history of the Acts been written, as you constantly suppose it was, by pædobaptists, whence is it, that there is such a silence of Infant sprinkling, as even you are compelled to confess there is? Would a modern pædobaptist have written, think you, as Luke has on the positive institution now in debate? To solve this difficulty, you say, “ The case of the Apostles
“ at

" at that period was *peculiar*." And you add, " I will endeavour to state it with all possible honesty and plainness."

Your prejudices considered, you have done, I believe, what you proposed. But all the " possible honesty," of a man under the influence of prejudice, is frequently unable to satisfy an impartial reader. That I have read what you have stated without any prejudice, I will not affirm. That I wished and endeavoured to do it, is a fact. Yet, that I am dissatisfied you will be convinced. And that I have some reason to complain of your statement, after you have read the following remarks, you will not, I presume, deny.

" The Apostles preached a religion which had "*never been professed before*." (P. 5.) They were " authorized by Christ, to teach A NEW RELIGION." (P. 6.) A religion which till then had not been *revealed*. (P. 6.) These and other expressions which tend to give the reader a strong idea of the novelty of the christian religion, I cannot approve. Was not the gospel preached to others in the earliest ages, as well as to us in the present? How then were sinners saved? We have, and let us be thankful for it, both a clearer and a stronger manifestation of the Divine mercy than the ancient Jews, in general, obtained. But the mercy manifested in salvation, is in every age the same. When it is convenient, you too are of the same opinion. For, in (P. 13,) you say, " We Gentiles, as a wild olive tree, are

“ grafted in *among them*, [namely, the Jews,] and
 “ with them partake of the root and fatness of the
 “ olive tree.” So you quote and apply Rom. xi.
 16, 17. But, by so doing, you wish to prove,
 “ There is not a word in the New Testament,
 “ which intimates an abridgment of our priviledges :
 “ or, that the christian dispensation of religion is
 “ inferior to any preceding.”---And what then?
Ergo, Infants are to be sprinkled. In a subsequent
 letter we will weigh the force of this inference.

“ The christian dispensation was not completed
 “ till Christ rose from the dead.” (P. 5.)---I should
 imagine you meant to say, that till then it did not
 commence. Though from what follows, it is not
 easy to collect your meaning. For you add, “ The
 “ Apostles therefore, went forth authorized by
 “ Christ, to teach a NEW RELIGION ; while John,
 “ the forerunner of our Lord, had a little prepared
 “ his hearers for it ; proclaiming the kingdom of
 “ God is at hand.” (P. 6.) The obscurity of this
 passage, and of others, ought to have been removed
 in your *second* Edition. But what you have said of
 a new religion, unrevealed and unknown till the
 Apostles were sent forth to preach it, if you have
 any meaning that is worth notice, many will be un-
 able to perceive it, and to some, your mode of ex-
 pression must be offensive. Let us consider this
 matter more attentively.

The father of John the Baptist, when filled with
 the Holy Ghost, said, “ Blessed be the Lord God
 of

“ of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his
 “ people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for
 “ us in the house of David; as he spake by the
 “ mouth of his holy prophets which have been
 “ since the world began. Luke i. 68—70.” Christ,
 himself, when contending with the Jews, appealed
 to their own records to confirm the truth of his mis-
 sion and the dignity of his character: “ Search the
 “ scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal
 “ life, and they are they which testify of me. John
 “ v. 39.” He appealed to the same testimony when
 he corrected those misapprehensions which his first
 followers had formed of him and of his conduct.
 “ O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the
 “ prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have
 “ suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?
 “ And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets,
 “ he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the
 “ things concerning himself. Luke xxiv. 25—27.”
 The Apostles also constantly pursued the same chain
 of argument. Paul, as his manner was, in a syna-
 gogue of the Jews, reasoned with them out of the
 scriptures: opening and alledging, that Christ must
 needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead;
 and that, *that* Jesus whom he preached unto them
 was the promised Messiah. See Acts xvii. 3. And
 when he was brought before Agrippa, he said,
 “ Having therefore obtained help of God, I conti-
 “ nue to this day, witnessing both to small and
 “ great, saying none other things than those which
 “ the

“ the prophets and Moses, did say should come :
 “ That Christ should suffer, and that he should be
 “ the first that should rise from the dead, and should
 “ show light unto the people and to the Gentiles.
 “ Acts xxvi. 22, 23.

So much, Sir, for your NEW RELIGION ; which
 you have stated as unknown till the Apostolic age :
 an idea which the preceding quotations expressly
 contradict. “ Judaism at the time of Christ’s
 “ coming, was the same with christianity ; and not
 “ in opposition to it ; so that there was no such
 “ thing as conversion from Judaism to Christianity.
 “ —Judaism,” (as repugnant to the gospel) “ not
 “ existing until the opposition to Jesus being the
 “ Messiah became general and national ; after that,
 “ indeed, those of the Jewish nation who believed
 “ in Christ, may be said to be proselytes from
 “ Judaism to Christianity, as the Apostle Paul and
 “ others.” See Dr. Gill on Baptism, in his Prac-
 tical Body of Divinity, P. 329, 330.

Your inference from the supposed novelty of
 christianity is this : “ Under these circumstances,
 “ then, you see, the persons who attended upon the
 “ preaching of the Apostles, *had* never received
 “ christian baptism at all : they *could* not, for the
 “ reason just mentioned, the christian religion hav-
 “ ing never been till then revealed.” (P. 6.) What
 follows is to this purpose ; That as the persons who
 attended upon the preaching of the Apostles, had never
 received christian baptism *at all*, they consistently ad-
 ministered

ministered this ordinance to SUCH CONVERTS “upon
 “ a profession of their *repentance* and *faith*—But
 “ who can justifiably infer from hence, that the
 “ CHILDREN of these profelytes were *rejected*?”
 (P. 6, 7.)

I answer; Either the children of these profelytes, had as you express it, never received baptism *at all* before they were sprinkled, or, in some sense, they had received it. If not *at all*, then, according to your own views of what is *consistent*, a profession of their repentance and faith should precede their submission to this duty. But, if you say, that the children of these profelytes had received baptism before they were sprinkled, I ask, *how*? was it as Levi payed tithes in Abraham? For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedec met him. Heb. vii. 9, 10. But if these children were baptized in their parents, why do you contend that the children of such profelytes, should be sprinkled? Is it, that they might be baptized more completely? Are you then, at last, what I am not, an *ana-baptist*? I am not disposed to cavil. I am serious in this remark. It appears to me, that you believe, if any person has not received christian baptism *at all*, he ought not to receive it, but upon a *profession* of his *repentance* and *faith*. But if he be the child of a profelyte to christianity, he is supposed, in some profound sense I cannot reach, to be baptized *in* or *with*, or *by*, his parent; at *least*, some how or other, he is not like other children; and therefore,
 your

your opinion is, he ought to be *sprinkled*, and not to be *rejected*.

Children as such, whether they are the children of proselytes or Pagans, are not rejected by us. It is the imprudent request of a fond and thoughtless, or misguided parent, that we reject; and not the petition of a child. I have baptized some in a state of childhood. I do not repent. And if it pleased God to call any to the knowledge of himself in a state of infancy, and to give him power to make that evident, with ability to request a personal submission to this duty, who could forbid water that he, though an infant, should not be baptized? But if a parent of any description, should request us to do that, as a religious act, which the Lord has not commanded, which his most faithful and intelligent servants, the Apostles, never performed, nor instructed us to perform, are we therefore to comply? God forbid!—"Our practice is not at all concerned
 " with the parents of the persons baptized by us,
 " whether they be Christians, Jews, Turks, or
 " Pagans; but with the persons themselves, whether they are believers in Christ or no; if they are
 " the adult offspring of Christians, yet unbaptized,
 " it is no objection to us; and if they are not, it is
 " no bar in the way of admitting them to baptism,
 " if they themselves are believers; many, and it
 " may be the greater part of such baptized by us,
 " are the adult offspring of those who, without
 " breach of charity, cannot be considered as Christians."

“ tians.” See Dr. Gill on Baptism, in his Practical Body of Divinity. P. 329.

“ Pagan nations,” you inform us, “ had been accustomed to rites, introductory to their own religions.” (P. 6.) No doubt. And Dr. Gill thought, that the pædobaptists would derive more materials for Infant baptism, in consulting what is said of the baptism of the ancient heathens, and its rites, than that of the Jews. A learned writer, it seems, says, It is a sort of *preamble* to it. Sperlingius de baptismo veterum Ethnicorum. See Dr. Gill’s Dissertation concerning the Baptism of Jewish Profelytes, at the close of his Practical Body of Divinity. You add, “ The Jewish people and their children, had been introduced into the religion of Moses by circumcision.” (P. 6.) And what of all this? Does it therefore follow, that some custom already in use, though of doubtful disputation, must be adopted, that neither Jews nor Pagans may be offended? But I observe, Sir, you are much more concerned to remove a stumbling block out of the way of the Jews, than from the Gentile nations. (P. 11. 12.) Yet you must own, that from the period you mention to this day, God hath visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for his Name. “ And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this, I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down: and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the re-
“ fidue

“ fide of men might feek after the Lord, and all
 “ the Gentiles upon whom my Name is called,
 “ faith the Lord, who doth all thefe things. Acts
 xv. 14, 15, 16.” And to the Meffiah it was faid,
 “ It is a light thing that thou fhouldeft be my fer-
 “ vant, to raife up the tribes of Jacob, and to re-
 “ ftore the preferved of Ifrael: I will alfo give thee
 “ for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeft be
 “ my falvation to the ends of the earth. If. xlix. 6.”

But your attachment to the ancient Jews is far from being uniform. At one time, we are *grafted in among them*. (P. 13) At another, they and the furrrounding Pagans are placed almoft on a level; each of them with repentance and faith, “ renounc-
 “ ing a falfe or imperfect difpenfation of religion,
 “ and embracing one that is true, compleat and per-
 “ petual: or, in other words, rejecting IDOLATRY
 “ and JUDAISM, and receiving the doctrines and laws
 “ of CHRISTIANITY. (P. 6.)” What you have faid in this page, may tempt fome to imagine, that the difference between Paganifm and Judaifm was not fo great as in fact it really was. But recollect, Sir, The ancient Pagans, by all their wifdom, knew not God. In Judah, however, God was known. His Name was great in Ifrael. In Salem alfo was his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion. Pfal. lxxvi. 1, 2. He fhewed his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Ifrael. He did not deal fo with any nation: and as for his judgments they did not know them. Pf. cvii. 19, 20.

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It is true, the Jews, as a body politic, were horribly depraved when Christ appeared among them. Yet Jerusalem, even at that mournful period, was neither Athens, nor Rome. In the polluted city, righteousness once dwelt; and in it yet remained the word of God; and favored with that light, some were found who had waited with ardent expectation for him who was, and is the consolation of Israel. Such were Anna and Simeon; Zacharias and Elizabeth. What had those venerable believers to renounce in order to receive christianity? Not any thing that I know of, but that external and temporary system which is commonly called the Sinai Covenant. Why, however, do I call this nothing? since many who were zealous for the law could not give it up; and since you, Sir, even you, yourself, seem determined to hold it fast. On the contrary, Pagans, as Pagans, were to renounce their idolatrous worship absolutely, and with detestation; as a profane system of absurdity and abomination.

In order to support Infant sprinkling, you next ascend from Moses to Abraham. Could nothing be found in the life of Adam which would countenance the antiquity of this acceptable custom? Thus you argue: Abraham, "*as a proselyte from a different profession*", was circumcised at the age of an adult person. But because HE was circumcised, under those circumstances, at an adult age, are we to infer that his CHILDREN were not, in their "*minority*?"

" *minority*? No; they received the same rite in " their INFANCY." (P. 7.)

Lawyers are well aware how difficult it is to produce a case in point. I wish we had more of their sagacity. It would be a means of guarding us against vicious analogy and seeming similitude. But *when* was Abraham circumcised? Not when he was called from *Ur*, of the Chaldees. Not when the Lord said unto him, " And I will bless thee, and " make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing." Not when Melchisedec met him and said, " Blessed " be Abram of the Most-High God, Possessor of " Heaven and Earth!" Not when the Almighty said, " Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and exceeding great reward." Not when Ishmael was born, though Abraham then was " fourscore and " six years old." But at the advanced age of " ninety years old and nine, he was circumcised in " the flesh of his fore skin. Gen. xvii. 1, 24." And *why* was that venerable man *then* circumcised? That those born in his house, and those bought with his money, of *any stranger*, which was NOT OF HIS SEED, Gen. xvii. 12. might be a separated people; dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations. That the multiplication of his legitimate seed, as the stars in heaven for multitude; and that, the manifold mercies and judgments of God towards them, might be conspicuous. And also, that the peculiarity of the Sinai Covenant, afterwards to be established with his descendants, might be properly observed;
till

till he who is *our peace* should break down the middle wall of partition between us and them, and make of *foreigners fellow citizens* with the *saints*, and of the household of God. Ephes. ii. 14, 19. If then, this illustrious family, were, for a season, to be thus a separate people, it was by express appointment. The subjects of circumcision are mentioned with precision. The very day on which that operation was to be performed on male infants is specified. The sex is distinguished. The penalty for disobedience is openly announced. See Gen. xvii. —The minutiae of that appointment, you see, was laid down with great exactness. Not any thing is left to conjecture. Is it credibie, Sir, that so much care should have been taken of a rite which was to be abolished, and yet, that we should search in vain to find any similar attention paid to that ceremony which you conceive to be adopted and perpetuated by the governor of the Christian church? Was Moses, the servant, either more faithful, or more explicit in the house of God than Christ, as a Son, over his own House? Are Infant sprinkling and circumcision *exactly* alike? In what then, are we to find disparity? See, Sir, how your *very similar* vanishes away when facts appear. Instead of *conformity*, behold, what a *contrast*!

But you go forward with your design, and say,
 “ When that religion was fully established and pro-
 “ fessed, all the male infants born under that dis-
 “ pensation, as well as adult profelytes still, were

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“ enrolled

“ enrolled among the faithful, and distinguished as
 “ Jews by the same rite. (P. 7.)” All the male in-
 fants born under that dispensation, *enrolled among*
the faithful! By whom? Did not *John the Bap-*
tist treat this idea with contempt? Did he not say
 to the circumcised, to many of them, to persons
 of the greatest authority among them, “ O genera-
 “ tion of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from
 “ the wrath to come? Bring forth, therefore, fruits
 “ meet for repentance; and think not to say within
 “ yourselves, we have Abraham to our father?
 “ Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9.” *Enrolled among the faithful!*
 When? when they were circumcised? Perhaps
 they might by the Pharisees. But who gave them
 that authority?—Circumcision was a sign significant
 of the fidelity of God to Abraham and his family
 according to the flesh: but it was not a mark of in-
 herent rectitude in the male infants born under that
 dispensation. *All the male* infants enrolled among
 the faithful? Had the *females*, then, no place in that
 register? Yet both were by birth, even as others.
 Your enrollment, and the present custom with ma-
 ny of registering the *births* and *christenings* of their
 children on stamped paper, are alike incompetent
 to convey piety, or to prove that such are, or ever
 will be *pious*. In Mount Sion, the City of the liv-
 ing God, there is a different and a better enroll-
 ment. The general assembly and church of the first
 born are written in heaven, in characters everlasting.
 But into that City there is no passage for the *uncon-*
verted.

verted. Neither *their* descent, *their* profession, *their* faith, nor *their* obedience, can make *them* meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John iii. 4."

The male children of Abraham were not only enrolled among the faithful, but they were also "distinguished as Jews by the same rite" of circumcision, (P. 7.) You have read, Sir, I presume, repeatedly, the two last verses of the second chapter of Romans. In those verses, the Apostle affirms, That "he is not a Jew which is one outwardly;" (for the Jewish nation had then rejected Jesus Christ,) "neither is that circumcision which is outwardly in the flesh;" (for that duty ceased when Christ arose from the dead,) "but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise," (alluding perhaps, to the name *Judah*,) "is not of men, but of God." The design of the Apostle in these verses, and in general, in the whole of this chapter, is to demonstrate, that the Jews were as criminal as the Gentiles; and therefore, they could not be justified by works in the sight of God; but on the contrary, resting in a violated law, they must expect deserved condemnation: from which, no external advantage would be any protection.

Circumcision was of no avail for justification to the transgressors of the moral law. Because, when they appeared before God the Judge of all, and

pleaded they were Jews by birth, and that by circumcision they entered into covenant with him, God was not to be contented with these vain appearances. He demanded the essence and reality. But the essence and reality of these things did not consist in names or external signs. These formed only the shadow and picture: Such circumcision was only figurative.—Circumcision, therefore, should either be considered as pertaining to the legal œconomy, in which it was an ordinance of Divine Appointment; or it should be considered as having respect to the covenant of grace; and in this view, it was typical of the circumcision of the heart. As a solemn *appointment* under the legal œconomy, it represented the entire and perfect accomplishment of the law; which consisted, not simply in external purity, but in perfect innocence or rectitude of mind. In this sense, it represented what man had not; but what he ought to have, if he would be justified by the works of the law. Gal. v. 2, 3, 4. As a *type*, circumcision represented evangelical purity; which consists in renovation of mind and reformation of conduct, arising from repentance of all false ways of access to God, and from faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the only way by whom we can come unto God as *Our Father*, and have fellowship with him in the spirit of adoption. See several of the preceding remarks, in *Les Vœuvres Posthumes de M. Claude*; Tome Quartrième sur Rom. ii. 28, 29.—These remarks throw some light on the
pro-

propriety of the Apostle's assertion, That they "are
" the circumcision, which worship God in the spi-
" rit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have *no* con-
" fidence in the flesh. Phil. iii. 3." I may then,
in allusion to the passage you have produced from
Exod. xii. 49. say, In this respect, " One law
" shall be to him that is home born, and unto the
" stranger that sojourneth among you." For there
is, *One Lord, one faith, one baptism.* Eph. iv. 5."

" Had we been informed, that the Apostles bap-
" tized persons of an adult age, who were born of
" BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN parents, the case would
" have been materially different, (P. 7.)" How so?
Was Mr Bennet's child any thing the better for
being born according to your wish? You do not ad-
mit that he was christianized by *birth*. Yet you do
not think, as I do, that the parents of that child are
unbaptized.—" But it had a right to be baptized."
On what ground? That some of its remote ances-
tors were baptized on a personal profession of their re-
pentance and faith? Strange right, indeed. Yet, I
cannot perceive that you are able to produce any
better. For of them who " never received christian
" baptism *at all*," you say, the Apostles " con-
" sistently administered this ordinance to SUCH CON-
" VERTS upon a profession of their *repentance* and
" *faith*, (P. 6.)"

" Had we been informed, that the Apostles bap-
" tized persons at an adult age, who were born of
" BAPTIZED CHRISTIAN parents,—that would

“ have furnished a precedent for doing so now.” (P. 7.) This, Sir, is at least to confess, that *precedents* are of *importance* in this business. Take care, Sir; this is a *tender* point on your side the question. Your brethren may grant the smile of approbation while you rest your plea on consequences and conjectures; but you will certainly alarm them if you appeal to *precedents*. That you may be more guarded in future, See the repeated and remarkable Concessions Mr. Booth has produced in his *Pædobaptism Examined, on the Principles, Concessions and Reasonings of the most learned Pædobaptists, Chap. 8. with the Reflections.*

Having mentioned Mr. Booth, and his irrefragable Treatise, suffer me to say, I think it rather hard, that he should be censured for not having done that which he never attempted; that which neither made, nor could make any part of his plan. All the Concessions which he has produced, are said by some of your brethren, to be of no weight; because, say they, those learned men, of whose Concessions Mr. Booth has given so great a number, still continued *pædobaptists*. And does not the strength of Mr. Booth's argument rest, professedly rest, on that idea? A disagreement between the Concessions and Conduct of those great men, may affect, so far as it goes, their own reputation; but it cannot affect the force of his argument.—It is well known, that in the *school*, some Pagan Philosophers asserted the unity of the Divine Being; while at the same time, in *public*, they wor-

worshipped with the multitude. Popular applause, fear of the people, and other motives not to their credit, will well enough account for their criminal conformity to a current, and almost universal custom. But after all, the Concessions of men are either collusive or sincere. Now, there is not the appearance of any *collusion* in the Concessions of those authors which Mr. Booth has produced. They had strong temptations to suppress what the force of conviction would not suffer them to conceal. They were, then, *sincere*. If they were not *consistent*, let us not, on that account, attempt to diminish the weight of an argument which is properly drawn from *their being what they were*: nor let us be too censorious on such authors, though they were, as who is not, in some things inconsistent. Let us rather inspect our own conduct; and by so doing, we shall, perhaps, soon find, that what has disgraced our betters is, to this day, in too many instances, our own disgrace.—To be unreasonably severe on the imperfections of good and great men, and blind, by choice, to their parts and piety, lead inevitably to confirmed contempt: yet to vindicate, or to follow what is wrong in the best of men, is the source of much evil; and it is also injurious to their reputation.

I return. You seemed to lament the want of a particular *precedent*. But why should you? First treat what we have with due attention. But if you may judge, even John did not baptize, that is, he

he did not immerse in Jordan. They who came to him, “possibly might go into the water, and come “up out of it.” (P. 18.) Gracious grant! Yet, “does that prove that the subjects baptized were “plunged all under water?” (P. 18.) *No sure.* “’Tis true indeed, that John accommodated the “multitude in a place where there were *many waters*, “(*ὕδαλα πολλά*) John iii. 23. But, might not this “be from considerations totally distinct from the “mode of baptizing?—Will this determine the necessity of immersion?”—*Surely not!* But to be *serious*. Of what use would any precedent be to you, while you indulge a disposition to trifle with those facts that demand a different attention? In such a temper, were precedents multiplied, some ingenious evasion would prompt you to treat them as you have treated those before us. I do not mean by what I have said to impeach your integrity. Could you see believer’s baptism to be your duty, I suppose you would be baptized. I only mean to say, that while such prejudice prevails, the evidence of truth will remain obscure.

Of the baptism of persons at an adult age, who were born of baptized christian parents, “there is “not a SINGLE INSTANCE of this kind to be met “with in the account.” (P. 7.) By the *account*, you seem to mean *the Acts of the Apostles*. But what is that history? Does it contain a narrative of the transactions of any one church for any number of years? Is it a register of births and burials; of christenings,

christenings, or of the reception of children born of baptized christian parents into the communion of saints? Is there in that account, a single instance of an infant who was "set apart as a visible subject of Christ's kingdom at large," not by *birth*, but by being *sprinkled*? Is there in that account, a single instance of the translation of such a child, from being a subject at large, into communion with any particular church? Let me then repeat the thought, to fix it upon the memory; (you see, Sir, how ready I am to adopt your manner of speaking,) that though the Apostles baptized persons at an adult age, and though such were added to the church; as recorded in the history of their acts; yet in those records, we find an entire omission of any the least report of Infant Baptism: never reading that Infants were either *sprinkled* or *immersed*. The reason is, because the Apostles published the gospel to *all nations* for *the obedience of faith*; and because they well knew, that those who had not faith could not, in any sense, obey the *gospel*.

The silence, or supposed silence, of scripture, on any subject, is too apt to please us, when we imagine if any thing be said, it is not what we could wish. You admit, there is "a comparative silence" in respect of the baptism of infants in the Acts of the Apostles. But I, Sir, contend, the silence is not comparative, but absolute. Had the Apostles known any thing of *sprinkling*, or of *christening* infants, (of which, I believe, they were as ignorant as they were of

of transubstantiation,) could they have been silent when they met together to give their united judgment, and to say what seemed good to the *Holy Ghost* and to *them*, on the litigated subject of *circumcision*?

“ Certain men which came down from Judea, taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be *circumcised*, after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. Acts xv. 1.” Surely, Sir, these “ Certain men,” though teachers, did not apprehend that Infant sprinkling was the well known substitute of circumcision. Nor did the Apostles. Had they been aware of such substitution, when they wrote their pacific letter to the brethren in *Antioch, Syria* and *Cilicia*, they might have said,

“ Ye know, brethren, we have relinquished *Judaism* and embraced *Christianity*. Ye know, that the former ceremony among us *Jews*, being *severe*, is now exchanged for one that is *easy* and *familiar*. (P. 12.) Ye know, that as one positive institute succeeds another, baptism now succeeds circumcision : *this* is abolished, *that* is retained and perpetuated. (P. 9.) We say *retained*, because it is *similar* to antient custom ; (P. 12.) we say it is *perpetuated*, because the Governor of the Christian church has *only* perpetuated a rite which had been in practice, and determined its use in the evangelical dispensation. (P. 2.) Infant sprinkling being *thus* established, if you regard that ceremony,

“ *remony*, with due *formality*, and *christianize* your
“ children by *christening* them, ye shall do well.”

“ FARE YE WELL.”

Thus the Apostles *might* have written on your principles. Thus they *must* have written, had one of your disposition been allowed to dictate. But they were better taught. Their arguments against those Judaizing teachers who strenuously contended for the continuance of circumcision, I shall have occasion to introduce in a following Letter.

That the want of particular precedents of any kind for adult baptism may not make you uneasy, I will endeavour to give you additional ground for satisfaction. One of the churches mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, was at Corinth. We have two Epistles to that church written by St. Paul. In the first, he says, to the members of the church at Corinth, “ Be ye followers of me, even as I also am
“ of Christ, 1 Cor. xi. 1.” Did he mean to say, Except in the Ordinances of Baptism and of the Supper of our Lord? That is not credible; since in this chapter he treats largely of the Lord’s Supper, and says, “ Now I praise you, brethren, that ye re-
“ member me in all things, and keep the *ordinances*
“ as I delivered them to you. (v. 2.) But what
“ he delivered to them, he “ received of the
“ Lord.” (v. 23.) Can we, however, suppose, that he was either more cautious, or more conscientious, in respect of the *second* positive institute than of the *first*? In what manner then, did he receive and personally

sonally submit to *baptism*? Was he not taught *before* he was baptized? Yes: He not only received his sight and heard who Jesus was, but he was also filled with the Holy Ghost. Acts ix. 17. Was he not baptized with his own *consent*? Yes: He arose and was baptized. Acts ix. 18. And was he not taught to consider it as an act of faith and devotion? Certainly he was. For, Ananias said to him, "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Acts xxii. 16." What he thus received himself, he recommended to others. And, (which is much against what some call a catholic temper,) he praised or dispraised other professors of christianity, as his own example in following the Lord faithfully, was either regarded or disregarded. He used to say, when speaking of himself and other Apostles, "Now *we command* you, brethren, in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every *brother* that walketh *disorderly*, and not after the *traditions* which he hath received of us. 1 Thess. iii. 6." I conclude, then, that either none of the children of baptized parents were baptized at Corinth, within the time referred to in the history of the Acts, or within the period mentioned in the two Epistles that were written to that church, or, that they were baptized as their parents had been baptized before them; upon a personal profession of their faith, by immersion, and, in every other respect,

with

with deference to the commission and command of Jesus Christ.

Will you, in order to weaken the force of this conclusion, assert, That by the *Ordinances* or *Traditions*, mentioned 1 Cor. xi. 2. the Apostle had *no* reference to the positive Institutions of Christianity ? Consider the context, and what is there said of the Supper of our Lord, before you form such a resolution. Will you say, his reasoning applies to that ordinance only ? I think not. Will you say, that *παράδοσις* has respect *only* to *unwritten traditions* ? Consult * Suicerus on that word, and you will, I believe, be prevented. But without consulting that learned Author, we may be convinced that there are *divine* as well as *human* traditions. “ Stand fast, and hold the *traditions* which ye have “ been taught whether by word, or by our Epistle.” So the Apostle exhorted the members of the church at Thessalonica. 2 Epist. ii. 15. And how he commanded the brethren, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw themselves from every brother that walked disorderly, and not after the *traditions* which he received from him and other Apostles of Christ, we have already observed.

I shall

* “ *Παράδοσις* eadem est cum verba *ἑγγραφή*, nihilque “ aliud quam ipsam Scripturam, S. significat. — Rectè “ *παράδοσις* & *διδασκαλία* conjunguntur. *Παράδοσις* est “ respectu Christi, qui apostolis doctrinam Evangelicam “ tradidit : *διδασκαλία* est respectu apostolorum, qui ea, “ quæ á Christo acceperunt, alios deinceps docuerunt.”

I shall only add, That so much is said of the spirituality of the Kingdom of Christ, in various forms of speech, in the New Testament, that we may be confident where there is not *the obedience of faith*, there is not any obedience which the *gospel* was published to promote. Rom. xvi. 26. Without faith it is *impossible* to please God. But the Apostle, in the text to which I now refer, is speaking of the personal faith of individuals, and not of any man's believing for another. For he that cometh to God, in any act of worship, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Heb. xi. 6. But you apprehend, Sir, that infants may be *brought* to God by *baptism*, though you must admit, they cannot *come* to him, in, what you so often call, that *ceremony*. Are you, however, *able*, are you required, Sir, thus to bring an Infant to God? As a *minister*, you had better pray for them, and instruct them as they are able to bear it. As a parent, your daily duty is enjoined you in Eph. vi. 4. "And ye, fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." May we have grace to regard the exhortation, and to leave the issue with our heavenly Father!

The term *profelyte* seems to have been very perplexing to you. Otherwise you would not, I believe, have so perplexed your Readers when that teasing term happened to fall in your way. For my part, I labour in vain to reach your meaning. That

That you may not say, this is owing to my stupidity, I shall adduce the following sayings and unsayings of yours, on this entangling subject. "Profelyte or disciple all nations;—how?—baptizing them." (P. 4.) "The Apostles were commanded to profelyte the Jews, and all other nations, from their *former* professions of religion, into the profession of CHRISTIANITY; and they were ordered by their Master to do this by baptizing them." (P. 6.) Here, to *baptize* is to *profelyte*. Yet you make the converted Jews say, "We understand that profelytes *are* to be admitted to its institutions", (i. e., to the positive institutions of christianity,) "by a formal rite, washing or baptizing," (P. 12.) Here, Sir, your formal right makes no profelyte. Your Jews were profelyted *prior* to their submission to any positive institute of Christianity. You speak to the same purpose in P. 13, and 14. of your *Defence*. What can I say to all this? All this is said of *profelytes*. But with you, to *teach*, to *disciple*, to *baptize*; nay, to baptize such as *cannot* be taught; *all* this, nay, *any* of these things, is to *profelyte* to *Christianity*. Yet after all, you choose to say, "we have no profelytes here to make." (P. 8.)

Can you wonder, Sir, if I, or a more sagacious Reader, should be perplexed with these contradictions?—But how am I to understand you, when you say, "We have no profelytes here to make?" I suppose you mean *in this Country*. What, *no* profelytes to make to Christianity? Are we all, then, in this happy

happy Island *born* christians? No, Master Bennet, himself, was not so born. He has already told us, as tutored by you, That till he was *christened*, he was not a christian. For so, with your assistance, we have made him speak in a preceding Letter. Consider, Sir, the consequences of your assertion. If we have *no* profelytes to make to christianity, then, even Master Bennet is not *profelyted*; though he has been regularly set apart to I know not what honours and obligations. Yes, Sir, we must grant, he is, at least, *your* profelyte. And if he be, I can prove, from your own testimony, that so far from having *no* profelytes to make, *in this Country*, our children must be profelyted *again* and *again*, before you will admit they are christians in *reality*. For, though Master Bennet is profelyted by *sprinkling*, though a christian in an *external* sense, he is not admitted, and to be sure ought not to be admitted, into any *particular* church, or *religious* society; because, (such is your concession,) he is not, *in the highest sense, a child of God.* (P. 4.)

And now, Sir, after all this labour in defence of your own practice, you begin to triumph. “ If we
 “ are asked then, why we do not baptize adult per-
 “ sons as the Apostles did?—the proper answer is,
 “ We *will*, when our situation is the same as theirs
 “ then was.” (P. 8.) Circumstances may differ, but, Sir, our general situation is, I believe, the same.
 “ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will
 “ make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, and
 “ with

“ with the house of Judah. *Not according to the*
 “ *covenant* I made with their fathers in the day that
 “ I took them by the hand to bring them out of the
 “ land of Egypt, (which my covenant they break,
 “ although I was a husband unto them, saith the
 “ Lord :) but this *shall* be my covenant that I will
 “ make with the house of Israel: *After those days,*
 “ saith the Lord, I will put my law into their in-
 “ ward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will
 “ be their God, and they shall be my people. Jer.
 “ xxxi. 31, 32, 33.”

Were not the Apostles under this *new covenant*?
 And are we not under the same covenant? and if
 believers, partakers with them of the same spiritual
 blessings, and called to perform the same spiritual
 worship? But according to this covenant, regenera-
 tion and faith, of necessity precede gospel obedience.
 According to it, and so it was foretold, the language
 of Jehovah is, “ I will put my *spirit* within you, and
 “ *cause* you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep
 “ my judgments and do them. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.”
 Here observe, that gospel obedience is so stated, as
 to be subsequent to the effectual teaching of the
 spirit; who is said to be the *cause* of that *effect*. We
 may also observe, that this obedience does not con-
 sist in paying attention either to *uncertain*, or to *vain*
 traditions; (from such we are redeemed,) but in
 walking in those statutes and judgments which are
 of *divine* appointment, and which properly belong
 to the present dispensation. Those statutes and

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judg-

judgments therefore, of which the prophets spake in predicting future events, were to be thus regarded when their predictions should be accomplished. We are not by these expressions to be carried back again to Mount Sinai; but by the language of a period which is passed away, believers are conducted to Mount Sion, and receive from legal terms, the most evangelical ideas. If these remarks be just, those statutes and judgments, of which the prophets spake, include every thing which an ascended Mediator has now made the rule of worship, or of duty, in his kingdom to the end of the world: for we have received a kingdom that cannot be moved. Heb. xii. 28. In what connection, in what manner, and with what disposition, those duties are now to be discharged, See Jer. xxxi. 31, 32, 33, 34. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Heb. viii. 6—13.

If such be the new obedience of the gospel, (which is not according to the external obedience of the Sinai Covenant) we can easily account, not only for the perfect silence of Infant baptism in the New Testament, but for a similar silence of every act of worship, considered as christian worship, which is not connected with repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: since such alone as repent and believe the gospel can worship God in *spirit* and in *truth*.

And I am persuaded, Sir, were you but fully convinced, that you really could not *christianize* an Infant, even in an *external* sense, by *sprinkling*, (a
power

power which the Apostles never imagined they had, nor ever pretended to possess) you would do as they did; wait with prayer and patience, till it pleased the Lord to add to the number of his disciples, by means which he has appointed, and by the manifestation of that mercy which he alone is able to display. Then, as any believed with the heart, and with the mouth made confession of their faith, at their request, you would baptize them in the Name of the Lord, and teach them to observe all things which he has commanded.

Thus, Sir, in future, may you have the honor to be employed! In every difficulty deriving substantial consolation from those gracious words, "And lo, "I am with you alway, even to the end of the "world! Amen. Matt. xxviii. 29." With this wish I conclude the present letter; who am, with real respect, your fellow servant in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

April 5th, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

L E T T E R IV.

REV. SIR.

HITHERTO, I find, but half your strength has been exerted. You have only drawn back your hand to strike with double force: or, as you express it, “To proceed more directly to the “case of Infants.” (P. 8.) We hope, however, to repel the meditated blow.

In the first place, you will have it, “There is “nothing in the NATURE of baptism to exclude infants from its administration.” (P. 8.) To make this seem the more probable you indulge a change of terms, and say, “There appears nothing in the nature of the ceremony to exclude them.”—What ceremony? Believer’s baptism is more than a ceremony. It is “the answer of a good conscience “towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. “1 Pet. iii. 21.”

Had you said, there was not any thing in the nature of *circumcision* to exclude an infant of the seed of Abraham from being circumcised, you would have said the truth. Male infants as well as adults, were equally competent to that appointment: because

cause, no spiritual dispositions were required in any person, as a prerequisite for circumcision. That rite was not intended to discriminate the just from the unjust. The *external* privileges attendant on circumcision, belonged equally to the carnal and ungodly of the seed of Abraham, as to those who truly feared God. And, as to *spiritual* blessings, "Cometh this blessedness then, upon the circumcision *only*, or on the uncircumcision *also*? For we say, that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision Rom. iv. 9, 10." And the case of those patriarchs who enjoyed true blessedness from Adam to Abraham, who were not commanded to be circumcised, abundantly confirms the Apostle's declaration. But baptism is not the substitute of circumcision. It requires what that did not. It requires *that*, which in the very *nature* of the act, excludes every creature who cannot make it the answer of a good conscience towards God.

Will you say, Sir, That the words of Peter, are only to be applied to the Administrator of this ordinance? If so, I should answer, what he does who baptizes or sprinkles an infant, is either *commanded*, or it is not. If it *be* commanded, why are we told, "NO FRESH DIRECT COMMAND was needed?" (P. 11.) And why are we not informed where an *old commandment* may be found? If it be *not* command-

ed the practice is presumptuous; and how can that which is presumptuous be to any, the answer of a good conscience? As to the poor infant, a good conscience in this act is quite out of question. "Not so," say some. "For an infant, if spared, as it grows up, may attend to the *moral* design of baptism, and gain great advantage by repeated meditation on that positive institution." This is to confess, that baptism is of no immediate use to an infant; and since more infants die than live, in this view, it must be useless to most. But may not a *Quaker* attend to the moral design of baptism as well as he who was sprinkled by Mr. Horsey? Better, I should think, because a Quaker has not any occasion for painful reflection upon the perversion of this ordinance respecting himself, by any external additions or alterations, whatever he may have on a wilful neglect to enquire into the genuine meaning of that duty. On the other hand, can a due attention to the command of Christ, I mean that attention which issues in personal obedience to his will; can this prevent, or perplex our meditations on the moral design of that command be what it may? God forbid!

But you think, Sir, that infant baptism "cannot surely be exceptionable as an INITIATORY rite." (P. 8.) I am sorry to disappoint you when you are so sanguine in your expectation. Yet suffer me to ask, Into what doctrine, into what duty, into what disposition, does this uncommanded rite initiate infants? May they not be brought up in the nurture
and

and admonition of the Lord, without it? But with it, into what prejudices are not many initiated? See the Catechism introduced in a former Letter.

“ Who can deny that Infants are capable of being *dedicated* to God?” (P. 8.)—Who can understand what some good and great men intend by the dedication of infants? If you mean something by this act no way included in prayer, who can prove from the New Testament, that such an act is now enjoined a minister of Jesus Christ? Yet, “ Where is “ the impossibility, or impropriety, of their being “ thus formally separated to the honors and obligations “ of the christian dispensation.” (P. 9.) The *impossibility*, Sir, is as great as the nature of the case will admit. It is acting without authority. It is acting against the highest authority. The *impropriety* of this act I have already noticed. It is injurious to many. It prevents a free and unprejudiced enquiry at years of discretion. It rivets the attention of children to the tradition of *men*, and to those rudiments which are not after Christ. But as to the *impropriety* of this act, you shall answer your own question. You contend, that infants should be formally separated to the honours and obligations of the christian dispensation by baptism. Yet you say, “ By this ceremony, however, he is not admitted, “ (that is, not any infant is admitted) into any *particular* church, or religious society.” (P. 3.) Do you not perceive the impropriety of these jarring propositions? Do not church-fellowship and com-

munion at the table of the Lord, make a part of the honours of the christian dispensation? And, Sir, will you exclude infants from these honours? Yes, you will, and do. But what I would complain of is this, you give them a name and title, and claim to great honours, without the least right. Or do you mean to say, (for in the midst of conjectures I must conjecture,) That Infants are thus formally separated to the honours of the christian dispensation, *providing*, they should ever be *converted*? If so, I would farther ask, when converted, would they not have an equal right to those honours, and an equal capacity to enjoy them, unincumbered with your formal separation?

“What are the covenant blessings that belong to the
 “unconverted,” (even though they should live to be)
 “professors of christianity? Surely, not the spiritual
 “blessings infallibly connected with salvation; for
 “in these, believers only have an interest. Not
 “outward prosperity; that being no where promif-
 “ed in the covenant of grace, either to the
 “visible, or to the invisible church. Not the sa-
 “craments, which, unless as signs and seals of spi-
 “ritual blessings, are of little value. Not the call
 “of the gospel, for they have no more benefit by it,
 “than infidels, and the openly profane. A strange
 “covenant indeed, which confers only an empty
 “unmeaning title, but from which the persons in
 “covenant derive no advantage!” See Dr. Erskine’s
 Theological Dissertations. (P. 86.)

If

If Dr. Erskine meant to say, that the blessings of the covenant of Grace were not settled on the Elect in Jesus Christ, prior to their conversion, I differ from him in opinion. But when he asks, "What then are the covenant blessings that belong to the unconverted?" I apprehend, he means to demand, what evidence have we that spiritual blessings belong to any unconverted person in particular? If this be his meaning, I agree with this able writer we have none. We ought, therefore, to affirm constantly, That, in regard to the "new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free: but Christ is all, and in all." Col. iii. 10, 11. As to baptism and the Supper of our Lord, being "signs and seals of spiritual blessings," it is obvious, that if the *first* be a sign and a seal, so is the *second*; and if they be so to *one* child, they are so to *every* child; unless *these* ordinances are enclosed by a wall of partition to the legitimate offspring of some illustrious progenitor, as circumcision and the passover formerly were to the progeny of Abraham.

It is true, Sir, you seem to have abandoned that path which many have paced. 'till, I believe, they are weary. I now allude to the old plea of the infants of believing parents being in the covenant, and their having, on that ground, a right to spiritual blessings. But, I presume that you might not offend

send your Brethren, you still give the infants of baptized christian parents, a determinate name or title. And, if I may judge between you, your brethren need not be offended: for there is not any difference between your Defence of Infant baptism, and theirs, for which you can be envied, either as a Disputant, or as giving, on your own arguments, a word of Exhortation.

“ This is practicable, and frequently done respecting civil communities.” (P. 9.) What is? You cannot mean a formal separation to the honours and obligations of the christian dispensation. What then? The preceding sentence is, “ Who can deny “ that infants are capable of being *dedicated* to “ God?” Is this practicable, and frequently done respecting *civil* communities? “ And was formerly, “ as a *religious* ceremony, we all know, of divine “ appointment.” What was? I am ashamed to ask these questions on a subject that *all* know; but I cannot reach your meaning: because you seem to have something in view which was frequently done in *civil communities*.

Whither we are to be sent at last for proof of the propriety of Infant sprinkling? Far and wide we have been compelled to wander already. Now we are called to *civil* communities to countenance a part of this ceremony. But, Sir, if there was any thing like it to be found in such communities, are they to be a model for that kingdom which is not of this world? Our Lord foresaw that his followers would

would be addicted to a criminal imitation of worldly policy. He cautioned them against it. He said, "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you. Matt. xx. 25, 26." *One is your Master, even Christ.* Matt. xxiii. 8, 10.

"Jewish children were set apart by circumcision to the honours and obligations of that dispensation." (P. 9.) What if they were?—But let me ask, Did you never read of a *wheel within a wheel*? Did it never occur to your mind, that there was a *covenant within a covenant*? Odd as this may seem, it was a fact. For the law of Moses was not against the promises; it was, for a season, subservient to the Covenant of promise *enjoyed* by Abraham; but *made* with, and *confirmed* by our Lord Jesus Christ. That national and transitory covenant, made at Horeb, is long since abolished. Why then, do you infer, that what the Jews did with their children under a limited covenant, broken and dissolved, that, or something like it, must now be done with ours?—I am, I own, wearied with these allusions; because they are both illusive and injurious. But I must have patience. For I perceive you have not yet done with such analogy.

It was hardly to be expected, that while you were thus engaged, a certain passage in Colossians would be overlooked. On this text you ask, "Does not Paul intimate, that christian baptism, in this
" respect

“respect, succeeds that rite?” (P. 9.) That is, Does not Paul in Colossians ii. 11. intimate, that christian baptism succeeds circumcision? But why you make use of those restraining terms, “in this respect,” I am not certain. As, however, you connect the whole with baptism, you lead christian parents to suppose, That if some person, called a minister, does not dedicate and separate their children to those honors and obligations which you repeatedly mention, their infants must sustain the loss. With the New Testament in your hand, is this either generous or just?—But “what reason so natural and “evident for his calling it,” (i. e. baptism) “the “circumcision of Christ, as this, That christian baptism incorporates the subjects of it among those “denominated CHRISTIANS, being the badge or “token of the christian religion, as circumcision “incorporated the subject on whom *that* was performed, among those denominated JEWS; being “the badge or token of the Jewish religion? This, “if I mistake not, is the scriptural connection between circumcision and baptism; as one positive “institute succeeds another: *that* is abolished, *this* “retained and perpetuated.” (P. 9.)

Such, Sir, is your comment on Colossians ii. 11. Let me lay before you the words of the text, and endeavour to refute your unfair remarks on this important passage. “In whom ye also are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, “in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh “by

“ by the circumcision of Christ.” Of whom is the Apostle speaking? Of him in whom the Colossians were complete. What does he affirm, That the members of the church at Colosse, whom he calls saints, faithful brethren, that knew the grace of God in truth; he affirms, that they were also circumcised in him, with the circumcision made without hands. He is not speaking of any act of theirs, but of their being circumcised in Christ. There is not any mention made of baptism in this text. There is not any allusion to it. There can be none: for *that* is never said to be *made*. Nor is this ordinance, even by *you*, who, in my apprehension, corrupt it, administered *without hands*. I own, the word baptism occurs in the following verse. You thought it convenient, it seems, to introduce it in your remarks on this. But every thing is best in its own place. As, however, that term was so near, why did you not extend your remarks to the twelfth verse. The reason is plain. It contains, indeed, the wanted term, but in a connection unpleasing, if not offensive, to some. The words are, “ Buried with him by baptism, wherein “ also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the “ operation of God, who hath raised him from the “ dead.”—This burial and resurrection through faith, “ by baptism into death,” Rom. vi. 4. will never be acceptable to any, on gospel motives, who are not *dead* to the customs of this world, and *alive* to the command of Jesus Christ.

Have

Have you forgotten that antiënt promise, " And
 " the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and
 " the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God
 " with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that
 " thou mayest live?" Deut. xxx. 6. This circum-
 cision is made *without hands*. It is essential to our
 enjoyment of the atonement of Christ, and to that
 obedience which he requires. " If ye *love me*
 " keep my commandments." Without it, we can
 neither put off the body of the sins of the flesh, nor
 tell what to make of the circumcision of Jesus Christ.
 Without it, baptism, even by immersion, is not the
 answer of a good conscience towards God. Is not
 this circumcision of the heart, of which so much is
 said in scripture, in different modes of expression,
 is not this essential to the existence of real christia-
 nity? If it be, can the evidence of christianity pre-
 cede its existence? Farther; if the heart of any
 person be circumcised to love the Lord, will that sa-
 cred operation make him reluctant to yield external
 obedience? Abraham was circumcised in *heart* and
 in *the foreskin of his flesh*. They who were bap-
 tized with the *Holy Ghost*, were baptized *in water*,
 in the name of the Lord. Acts x. 47. 48.

Doctor Gale, on the passage before us, (Col. ii.
 11.) has justly observed, " The circumcision here
 " called christian, must be either *wholly* inter-
 " nal or *wholly* external, or partly both. It cannot
 " be *partly* internal, and *partly* external, because,
 " if it consists of these two parts, one whereof
 may

“ may be performed *without hands*, and the other
 “ *not*, it cannot be called circumcision *without hands*;
 “ for, in order to make it complete, another part
 “ is necessary which must be performed *by hands*;
 “ and what is true of any *one* part, cannot be de-
 “ nied of the *whole*. And therefore, if the christian
 “ circumcision does but *partly* consist of what must
 “ be performed *with hands*, it is not a circumcision
 “ *without hands*; which is directly contrary to St.
 “ Paul’s assertion. And our adversaries will grant,
 “ this circumcision cannot be *wholly external*. It
 “ remains, therefore, that it must be a circumcision
 “ *wholly internal*; and consequently, it cannot be
 “ baptism.”—See Dr. Gale’s Reflections on Mr.
 Wall’s history of Infant baptism. P. 450, 451.—I
 only add, That though the circumcision *without*
hands is not *baptism*, yet it is connected with it, and
qualifies for a due submission to that solemn appoint-
 ment.

Unweariedly you pursue your almost constant
 mode of argument *analogy*. Infants though *inca-*
pable of *comprehending* the *intent* of circumcision,
 when they were circumcised, yet they underwent
 that operation. On this fact, you ask, “Why then
 “ should not christian baptism be administered to
 “ infants?” (P. 10.) How often, Sir, must you be-
 told, Because the one was appointed, but the other
 is not. “If *circumcision* was omitted, it was ex-
 “ pressly declared of that subject, by the blessed God,
 “ he hath broken my covenant; and wherein is
 “ the

“ the difference if baptism (you mean if the baptism of infants) now be omitted ? ” Must I again say, Infant baptism is not commanded ? There is no declaration of divine displeasure against them who reject it. We have no precept, no promise, no example in the word of God to engage us to comply with this ceremony. Could all this be said of circumcision under the Mosaic Economy ? From covenants so different as that which is abolished and that which abides, ever to argue for *external* analogy, is not this to confound what God has taken care to distinguish ? Is it not to make the shadow a substance, and the substance a shadow ? Perpetually to have recourse to such argument, is not this to confess, you are not acquainted with any thing which is better calculated to support your leading proposition, laid down in the *fifth* page of your *Defence* ?

From the supposed advantages of circumcision, you conclude, if Infant baptism had not been the substitute of that ceremony, the Jews would have been violently offended. And their total silence on this head, is to you, “ the clearest proof in the world, that the stream of mercy to them and theirs, flowed on in the *ancient channel*.” (P. 11.) The advantages of circumcision are by you over-rated. When some pleaded for the continuance of that painful operation, Peter said, “ Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, “ which neither our father, nor we were able to bear ? Acts xv. 10.” Let circumcision and its attendant

attendant priviledges be compared with Pagan superstition, and, in various views, it had, I confess, "the advantage much every way." But if compared with the present state of the kingdom of Christ, where is the glory? In it, God puts *no* difference between Jews and Gentiles, purifying their hearts *alike* by faith. In this kingdom, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for," (says the Apostle,) "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal. iii. 28, 29."

Now, if between Jews and Gentiles, God puts *no* difference, why do you? And why are you alarmed lest the Jews should be irreconcilable to the gospel, unless some custom of theirs, already in use, be adopted? Did not Jehovah say, by Moses, "They have moved me to jealousy, with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, *I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation?*" Deut. xxxii. 10." You will say, this prediction has respect to the *carnal* Jews, who rejected and crucified the Messiah. I admit it. But did not those Jews who were *spiritual*, receive him whom their nation rejected; and, like Paul, count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus their Lord? Phil. iii. 4—11.

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How "a total silence" should be the clearest proof in the world, some, perhaps, will not be able to comprehend. And how "a total silence" among the Jews, (or their resigning an antient rite without reluctance) how any thing like this, is to be reconciled with the repeated, and united efforts of Judaizing teachers to revive and establish circumcision, I confess, I cannot conceive.

It is well known, that "in the Apostles days, the
 " christians converted from *Judaism* were exceed-
 " ingly inclined and zealous to incorporate circum-
 " cision with christianity. Their zeal in this mat-
 " ter became very troublesome to the churches.
 " What method do the Apostles take to remedy
 " this evil? Do they ever instruct them they need
 " not be so tenacious of one positive rite, since ano-
 " ther was appointed in its stead; to be adminis-
 " tered to the same persons of the same age? Such
 " an observation would have been very much to the
 " purpose; and the most likely that could be to
 " give the judaizing christians satisfaction; and
 " therefore, I suppose the Apostles would have
 " taken this method, if the fact were really so,
 " that baptism was substituted in the room of cir-
 " cumcision. But do they go this way to work?
 " Nothing is to be found of it in all their reasonings
 " to dissuade christians from circumcision. They
 " warn christians that the zealots for circumcision
 " were *subverters* of men's souls. Acts xv. 24. that
 " circumcision availed *not* unto justification; whe-
 " ther

“ther that rite be considered as derived from *Moses* or from *Abraham*. Rom. iv. But, *that if*
 “*they were circumcised Christ should profit them no-*
 “*thing*. Gal. v. 2. This is the way they treat that
 “Old Testament rite: as a useless, burdensome,
 “injurious ceremony. But they never go about to
 “soften the Jews, by telling them that christianity
 “has another rite *in its stead*. And yet this way of
 “dealing with them is not more soft than it was
 “likely to have proved effectual; if it were so that
 “baptism is the substitute of circumcision. Now,
 “because the Apostles never talk in this strain, it
 “seems natural to infer they never thought so.”
 See a course of Letters to Bp. Hoadly. P. 121, 122.

“The stream of mercy to them and theirs, flow-
 “ed on in the *ancient channel*.” (P. II.) You seem
 to have in view a channel swelled with these
 streams; consecration, initiation, regular introduc-
 tion and formal claim. Whatever impropriety there
 may be in this figurative turn, your design is plain.
 For you add, “Thus considered too, as an *ancient ap-*
 “pointment, no FRESH DIRECT COMMAND was
 “needed.” (P. II.) So that, Infant baptism being vir-
 tually contained in some positive appointment, there
 was no need of any FRESH DIRECT COMMAND on
 this business; especially to the Jews. But how are
 we of Gentile extraction to trace the stream of In-
 fant baptism to its original source? this is not so easy
 to determine. Even you, Sir, to whom this stream

is so refreshing, have yet made no discovery of that fountain from which it flows.

So far as your present remark has any reference to positive institutions, I would observe, That they are of such a nature as to allow no room for conjecture. We cannot infer from two positive institutes two more; or from one, that another must be its substitute. Sacrifices were appointed long before circumcision and the passover. Yet what other positive institute could the Patriarchs, or any other person, infer from that appointment? So far from this, they never knew *what* to sacrifice, nor *where*, nor *how*, nor *why*, but as they were commanded and taught. Every thing that is pendent on the will of God, can only be known to us as he is pleased to make it manifest. And in any thing relative to religion, why should we wander from his written word in order to know his will? Or with it, still wander by indulging our fancy, instead of increasing our faith? Where fancy enters faith retires, where certain customs prevail, the command of God is made of none effect.

But I rather wonder, Sir, since you contend that the Apostles went forth, authorized by Christ, to teach a NEW RELIGION; so *new*, that till then it never had been *revealed*; (P. 6.) in recollection of what you have said on this subject, I rather wonder, that in this *new* religion, you should plead for an *old* custom; the channel of which to you, is so visible, that NO FRESH DIRECT COMMAND was needed. I should
have

have thought, if this *new* religion admitted any positive institute, it would have been something as *novel* as all the rest. So, Sir, perhaps, would you, had you not undertaken the cause you have; which being crooked, you are obliged to turn, as it turns or else to leave it.

“ The blessing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.” (P. 13.) May we ever admire this mercy! But when did Abraham receive that blessing? In circumcision, or in uncircumcision? “ And we, like Isaac, are the children of promise.” (P. 13.) Who are? The legitimate offspring of believers? No. “ They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are accounted for the seed. Rom. ix. 8.”—“ That I may speak more plainly, all those that are the *children of Abraham* according to the flesh, are not therefore the adopted children of God; it is not their *blood*, but their *faith* must make them such. There are some of *Abraham's seed*, that are selected from the rest, to whom the *promise* was made; who are therefore called *children of the promise*: and of this sort are all they, who are born after the *spirit*, (as *Isaac* is said to be. Gal. iv. 23.) whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*. The sense of this verse is fully expressed. Gal. iii. 8, 14. and iii. 29. vid. Gal. iv. 28.” See Poole's Annotations, on Rom. ix. 8.—The children of promise, as the same Author observes, in his Synopsis Criticorum,

“ corum, are “ geniti per promissionem Evangelij.
 “ Vid. Galat. Cap. iv. 28.” And of these children,
 so runs the ancient prediction: “ A seed shall serve
 “ him; it shall be accounted to the LORD for a ge-
 “ neration. Ps. xxii. 30.”

“ There is not a word in the New Testament,
 “ which intimates an abridgment of our privileges:
 “ or, that the christian dispensation of religion is in-
 “ ferior to any preceding.” (P. 13.) Right: Not
 a single word. But would you so abuse this fact, as
 to infer, we ought, therefore, to have a splendid
 temple in an earthly Canaan; that sacrifices and al-
 tars ought to be continued, and that new moons
 and festivals ought to be observed; or that some-
 thing similar to those appointments should still be
 regarded. The superiority of the present dispensa-
 tion is conspicuous and confessed. But in what
 does its excelling glory consist? In exchangeing a se-
 vere rite for one that is easy and familiar? Is this
 the only alteration that is mentioned; even in rela-
 tion to positive institutions? (P. 12.) Impoverished
 idea. Read, Sir, with attention the third chapter
 of the second Epistle to the Corinthians, and you
 will renounce this poor opinion. You will instantly
 perceive, it is the ministration of the Spirit, that
 constitutes the comparative excellence of the gospel
 dispensation, compared with the preceding œconomy.
 “ Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”
 And with the conviction and consolation of that
 Spirit,

Spirit, no command of Christ is grievous : not even baptism by immersion.

But are you accurate when you talk of an "abridgement of *our* privileges?" Who are we? Are we of the posterity of Abraham according to the flesh? Were not our Progenitors Pagans? Are we not of Gentile extraction? "The people which *sat in darkness saw great light : and to them which sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up. Mat. iv. 16.*" And we, shall *we* talk of an abridgement of *our* privileges?

In support of the practice which you attempt to defend, you produce 1 Cor. vii. 14. Yet you well know, that several of your most learned brethren give up that passage as useless in the present debate. On a passage so fully explained by some, and so readily given up by others, I shall only make the following remarks.

The Apostle in this text speaks of a man and his wife unequally yoked. The one a believer, the other an unbeliever. The believer is supposed to have received the gospel *since*, and not *before* the conjugal relation commenced. The unbeliever probably, was a Pagan. The question is, Does not a moral union with Jesus Christ, dissolve, in such circumstances, the matrimonial contract? The answer is, no ; by no means. For though a moral union with Christ, makes it criminal in any to marry an infidel, yet as the parties in question, *were*

set apart * *to* each other *for life*, while they were both of them unacquainted with the gospel, their civil connection, formed as it was, could not be considered as criminal. For marriage is honorable *in all*, and the bed *undefiled*. Their children therefore, were legitimate, holy, and not unclean. Much to the same purpose, Malachi spake to the Jews of a legitimate offspring.—“The LORD hath been
 “ witness between thee and the wife of thy youth,
 “ against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet
 “ she is thy companion and the wife of thy cove-
 “ nant. And did he not make one? yet had he
 “ the residue of the Spirit: and wherefore one?
 “ that he might seek *a godly seed*:” (זרע אלהים
 מִבְּקֶשׁ quærens semen Dei :) “therefore take heed to
 “ your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against
 “ the wife of his youth. For the LORD the God
 “ of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away. Mal.
 “ ii. 14, 15, 16.” But what has this to do with
 baptism, or with church communion? If by rea-
 son

* Even Mr Towgood admits this idea. He says, “That
 “ the unbelieving yoke-fellow was so far sanctified by
 “ (or *to*, or because of,) the believing, as that their
 “ children which would otherwise be UNCLEAN, *are now*
 “ HOLY.” His inference, I must leave him to support.
 It is, however, obvious, that he considers the children of
 such parents *holy* before they are *christened*. You, who
 followed him pretty closely, seem to be of a different opi-
 nion. See his Baptism of Infants, a reasonable service,
 Page 29.

son of the believing husband or wife, the children of both *were* holy, one would imagine the still unbelieving parent, sanctified by, or *to* the believing parent, was *as holy* : yet who ever contended, that such a parent, though thus sanctified, ought to have been baptized ? Further ; if where but *one* parent is a believer, the children *are holy*, will they be *more holy* on being baptized in a state of *infancy* ? But, in a *moral* sense, we know that children, let their parents be whom they *may*, are *not holy*, but *unclean*. So much so, that if ever they be holy, they must be born again. Names cannot alter the nature of things.

“ Soon as we draw our infant breath,
 “ The seeds of sin grow up for death ;
 “ Thy law demands a perfect heart,
 “ But we’re defil’d in ev’ry part.”

Such is the language of a penitent, according to Dr. Watts ; who adds,

“ Behold, I fall before thy face ;
 “ My only refuge is thy grace :
 “ No outward forms can make me clean ;
 “ The leprosy lies deep within.”

Having urged, what you thought argumentative on the NATURE of baptism, you seem to be conscious more will be expected. “ To render the
 “ argument conclusive,” which, by your own confession

cession is not so at present, you propose to enter into the HOUSEHOLDS of the saints. Thither I mean to follow you. Grant me, however, a little respite from additional remarks. Other and better employ than disputation, is now approaching. May I bring from it a spirit and temper adequate to the task I have undertaken: so much so, that I may finish my *Answer* to your *Defence*, with some degree of christian reputation! Such is the unfeigned desire, and shall be the assiduous endeavour of your respectful

humble servant,

April 7, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

LET-

L E T T E R V.

REV. SIR.

I Am now at leisure to attend you to the HOUSEHOLDS of the saints. But why, as one of your readers, do you invite me thither? Is it to behold their piety towards God, or their benevolence towards men; walking together as the heirs of the grace of life? Alas! no such thing. "This is not your subject." True. What then? Infant baptism? But what shall we see of that ceremony in the households of those saints to which you introduce us? Why, you are to prove that in those households there were *Infants*; * and secondly,

* Mr Theodore Huet, Pasteur de l'Eglise Wallonne d'Amsterdam, endeavours to avail himself of the baptism of households, in his Sermon du Baptême des petits Enfants. Yet, having said "There is every appearance that the Apostles administered Baptism to the infants of those who embraced Christianity, in administering it to their parents:" he is compelled, by the force of truth, to add, "We cannot, it is true, allege any *example* that is certain, and that carries with it *demonstration*. If we could, we should not need any thing more to put a period to this controversy." See Mr Huet's Sermons sur les Sections du Catechisme de Calvin. Tome Quatrième, P. 252.

ly, that those Infants were *baptized*. This, if not a matter of conscience, is certainly a curious subject. And as I cannot persevere in my present intention and refuse your invitation, I will endeavour to pay due regard to your ingenious observations on christian parents, and on the children committed to their care.

Your leading remark is this, " That when the
 " master or head of a family was profelyted, and
 " embraced christianity, by professing repentance
 " and faith, the WHOLE HOUSEHOLD were actually
 " baptized, AS THE MEMBERS OF HIS OR HER FA-
 " MILY." (P. 13, 14.)—It is true, Sir, we do read
 of three or four households which were baptized
 when the heads of those families submitted to that
 ordinance. But, does it therefore follow, that these
 households were baptized without their own *consent*;
 without either *repentance* or *faith*; and as being
members only of those families in which their masters
 or parents were baptized? Does it follow, from the
 few families mentioned in the New Testament, that
 whenever the Apostles baptized any *other* parent or
 master, the children and servants were baptized at
 the same time? Did John the Baptist baptize whole
 households? or was not that multitude which went
 out to him as other multitudes in common are?
 " And all the people that heard him, and the pub-
 " licans justified God, being baptized with the bap-
 " tism of John. But the pharisees and lawyers re-
 " jected the counsel of God against themselves, be-
 " ing

"ing not baptized with the baptism of John. Luke " vii. 29, 30." Here every thing appears to be *personal*, and not *relative*. They who rejected, rejected the counsel of God against *themselves*; and they who submitted and justified God, did so for *themselves*. At this period, the kingdom of heaven suffered violence, and the violent took it by force. Matt xi. 12. *Individuals*, therefore, were thus addressed, " *He* that " hath ears to hear let *him* hear. Matt. xi. 15."

You have taken care, Sir, to place in conspicuous capitals, the words WHOLE HOUSEHOLD. And if great letters and great force of argument were inseparably connected, I should not have dared to have written an *Answer* to your *Defence*. Children may be dazzled with such appearances; men are not so affected. You must admit, that general terms are frequently of limited construction. Of this fact, take the following instances. " Then went out unto him," [John the Baptist,] " Jerusalem and *all* Judea, and *all* the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of " him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Matt. iii. " 5, 6." Yet who doubts, that many, who dwelt in these places, did not go out to him? or that many who did, were not baptized? In the Commission it is said, " Go ye, therefore, and teach *all nations*." Yet who apprehends that Christ, in this Commission, meant to say, *Teach all in all nations*? Infants, ideots, and those who were insane, were of course excepted. In Samuel it is said, " And the man Elkanah, and *all his house*, went up to offer to " the

“ the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But
 “ Hannah went not up; for she said to her husband,
 “ I will not go up till the child be weaned,
 “ and then I will bring him, that he may appear before
 “ the Lord, and there abide for ever. 1 Sam. i.
 “ 21, 22.” Here are *Elkanah* and *all his house* going
 up to offer to the Lord, and yet we are told, that
Hannah and *Samuel* were left at home.

“ It is certain the word *house* or *household*, is often
 “ used where none are meant but such as are come
 “ to years of understanding. For example, Luke
 “ xi. 17. *A house divided against a house*. John iv.
 “ 53. *Himself believed, AND HIS WHOLE HOUSE*.
 “ Acts ii. 36. *Let ALL THE HOUSE of Israel know*
 “ *assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom*
 “ *ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ*. Acts xviii.
 “ 8. *Crispus,—believed on the Lord, WITH ALL*
 “ *HIS HOUSE*. Tit. i. 10, 11. *Deceivers, who subvert*
 “ *WHOLE HOUSES*. Consequently, to infer it as
 “ fact, that infants were baptized, as being part of
 “ the house, is *supposing* and taking for granted,
 “ not *proving* the matter in question. If all the
 “ families in Great Britain were obliged to take
 “ an oath of allegiance; any man who should here-
 “ after read our history, would make a very wrong
 “ inference, if he should, merely from the word *fa-*
 “ *milies*, or *households*, conclude, this oath was ad-
 “ ministered to children; though they are very ca-
 “ pable of the *outward and visible sign*, which is
 “ only *kissing the book*. I think it unreasonable, says
 Dr.

" Dr. *Hammond*, that the Apostle's bare mention
 " of baptizing his household, 1 Cor. i. 16. should
 " be thought competent to conclude, that *infants*
 " were baptized by him, when it is uncertain whe-
 " ther there were any such at all in his house." See
 a Course of Letters to Bp. Hoadly. p. 99, 100, 101.

" Paul baptized the household of Stephanas."
 (P. 14.) Admitted. But what I have just quoted
 from Dr. Hammond shows, even in his opinion,
 how unreasonable it is to adduce that fact to answer
 your intention. Besides; is it not said of the house-
 hold of Stephanas, " that it is the first fruits of
Achaia, and that they have addicted *themselves* to the
 ministry of the saints? 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

Lydia and her household were baptized." (P. 14.)
 Admitted. But who were they? She said to Paul
 and his companions, after she and her household had
 been baptized, " If ye have judged me to be faith-
 " ful to the Lord, come into mine house and abide
 " there." They consented. " They entered into
 " the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the
 " brethren, they comforted them, and departed.
 " Acts xvi. 15, 40." — But, perhaps, these *brethren*
 were not of her household. It might be so. I find,
 however, none but brethren in her house. When
 you are able to prove that Lydia had any children,
 I will pay uncommon attention to the offspring of
 that amiable woman.

" Was not the case just similar too respecting the
 " Philippian Jailor? (P. 14.) Yes, to the preced-
 ing

ing account, which I have laid before you, it was. For,
 “ they spake to him the word of the Lord, *and to*
 “ *all that were in his house*; and he rejoiced be-
 “ lieving in God, *with all his house*. Acts xvi.
 “ 32, 34.

You can Sir, be very attentive to circumstances when they seem to afford you the least advantage: but here is one circumstance in the case of the Philippian Jailor which your brethren sometimes mention, (and I am told has been lately mentioned) to their disadvantage. “ Can we believe,” say they, “ that the Jailor and his household were immersed “ at *midnight*?” Why not, when the fact rests on “ such authority? But if a part of his household was not believers, but infants, were they to be taken out of bed at *midnight*, in order to be baptized? At a period when Philip said to a well instructed Eunuch, “ If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. “ Acts viii. 37. Would Paul say to a converted Jailor, “ Whether your children believe, or are “ destitute of faith, though it is *midnight*, they must “ *immediately*, be baptized?” Were this admitted, would it not seem as if the baptism of infants is essential to their salvation? What else could justify such precipitate proceeding? Under the law of Moses, the male children of the Jews were not to be circumcised till the eighth day. And as many children died before that appointed period, may we not infer, that the circumcision of infants was not essential to their salvation? Are christian parents to be

be brought into greater jeopardy than the father of Sampson, or of Solomon? Let it not be said then, that infants were baptised at *midnight*: lest we again open a door to that kind of superstition which, in what is called the catholic church, has distressed the minds of many. But where persecution prevails, and God is pleased to make his word triumphant; when any in such a situation are converted, rejoice in the Lord, and wish to obey him, they may be allowed to make uncommon haste, in keeping his commandments.

And now, Sir, after all that is said in the Acts of the household of the Philippian Jailor, in support of believer's baptism, can you continue to suppose, that the Greek word *οὗτος* being in the singular number, is of sufficient force to set aside that evidence? I am apprehensive, you will not long retain that strange opinion. You may still contend, for aught I know, that there were infants in his family; but I hope you will vouchsafe to give us better satisfaction on that article, if you expect that we should give you credit.

“ When Peter addressed his awakened hearers, exhorting them to be baptized, does he not place the argument in the same form?” (P. 14.) You mean, Sir, in the same form in which you have placed it; which is, “ That when the master or head of a family was profelyted, and embraced christianity, by professing *repentance* and *faith*, the **WHOLE HOUSEHOLD** were actually baptized, as

H

“ THE

"THE MEMBERS OF HIS OR HER FAMILY." (P. 13, 14.) In order to support what your question affirms, you quote and obscure these memorable words: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Acts ii. 38, 39."

I perceive in running over your fourteenth page again, that you have not produced these verses at full length. But as every man has a right to adduce what is convenient to his purpose, either in the words or sense of any writer, of that, I make no complaint. Where meaning is neither perverted nor obscured there is no injury; and to men of sense and candour there will be no offence. But as I think you have not given us the meaning of what you have produced, I will endeavour to convince you of this by the following remarks: Peter spake to the distressed; to men who were *pricked in their heart*. His wish was to alleviate their sorrows. It was more. It was their conversion. They said, "What shall we do?" Then Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you," (that is one by one, and one for one, as the personal duty of each) "in the Name," (that is by the authority, and according to the command of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins;) "and," (*in so doing*) "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise" "mise

“ wife (spoken of by the Prophet Joel) is to you and
 “ to your children ; and to all that are afar off, even
 “ as many as the Lord our God shall call.” The
 words which close the second chapter of Joel, are,
 “ And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall
 “ call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered :
 “ for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be de-
 “ liverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the *rem-*
 “ *nant* whom the LORD shall call.” “ Even all
 “ the rest, whom Jehovah shall any where call to
 “ the knowledge and the worship of himself.” See
 Dr. Chandler’s Paraphrase on the text.

The purpose of God to call and his effectual cal-
 ling have been, are, and ever will be of equal ex-
 tent. Till any person is thus called; what promise
 replete with spiritual blessings, can he enjoy? But
 whoever is the called according to the purpose of
 God, he not only understands, but receives, em-
 braces and practically regards the promises of the gos-
 pel. Such were many who attended to the Address
 of Peter. “ Then they that gladly received his
 “ word were baptized : and the same day there were
 “ added to them about three thousand souls. And
 “ they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine
 “ and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in
 “ prayers. Acts ii. 41, 42.” Can this text, or
 “ context, be of any service to you? Yes, when
 you read it for your own edification, as a christian,
 it may : but when you attempt to press this passage
 in order to produce from it a proof that Infants ought

to be baptized, then, however pressed, it refuses to give you the least assistance.

“ *You and your children* is nothing more than *you*
 “ *and your POSTERITY.* [τοῖς τέκνοις ὑμῶν.] So in
 “ John viii. 39. *If ye were Abraham’s CHILDREN*
 “ [τέκνα] *ye would do the works of Abraham.* Acts
 “ xiii. 32, 33. *The promise which was made unto*
 “ *the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same UNTO US*
 “ *THEIR CHILDREN.* [τέκνοις.] Matt. xxvii. 25.
 “ *His blood be upon us and on OUR CHILDREN.*
 “ [τέκνα ἡμῶν.] An imprecation which has miracu-
 “ lously rested on them, and on their *descendants*,
 “ for almost seventeen hundred years.—So that the
 “ word *children* here, has no reference to the in-
 “ fantile state; nor does the *promise* mean *baptism*.
 “ The learned Doctors, *Hammond* and *Whitby*, tho’
 “ they have both written in favor of Infant bap-
 “ tism, conclude *this text* is nothing to the purpose.
 “ The words of the *first* are—If any have made use
 “ of that very *unconcludent* argument [the promise
 “ is made *to you, and to your children*] I have noth-
 “ ing to say in defence of them. I think the word
 “ *children* there, is really the *posterity* of the Jews,
 “ and not peculiarly their infant children.—And
 “ *Whitby* says, These words will not prove a right
 “ of *infants* to receive baptism: the *promise* men-
 “ tioned here, being that only of the *Holy Ghost*,
 “ mentioned verses 16, 17, 18, &c. See a Course
 “ of Letters to Bishop Hoadly, p. 88, 89, 90.
 “ The words of Dr Hammond are quoted from
 “ Resol.

" Resol. 6 Qu. Edit. 12mo. p. 256. Sect. 81.
 " And the words of Dr Whitby, from his Annot.
 " in Acts ii. 38, 39."

From the passage above produced from Acts ii,
 you argue thus, " Now, if, because the divine pro-
 " mise reached the profelyted parents, *they* were to
 " be baptized, and he asserts the same promise equ-
 " ally belonged to their *children*, what should you
 " infer, but, that for the same reason these should
 " be baptized too?" (p. 14.)

It is evident, that the divine promise *so* reached
 the profelyted parents, that it was received by *faith*;
 then, and not till then, they who gladly received
 the word were baptized. But unless it be *so* applied
 to their children, and so received by *them*, how
 should there be the *same* reason for their being bap-
 tized? I would infer, therefore, that when the
 children of believers obtain *like* precious faith with
 their parents, they will then obey the gospel, and
 become followers of them who through faith and
 patience inherit the promises.

You take a liberty in the following words which
 I think is not to be commended. " And, says the
 " inspired writer, 'tis binding, not upon you Jews
 " only, but profelyted Gentiles too *; those that

H 3

" are

* Dr Doddridge mentions a fact in relation to this clause,
To all that are afar off, which you do not seem to have re-
 collected. His words are, " Since Peter knew nothing as
 " yet of the intended *calling of the Gentiles*, he could only

" mean

“ are afar off, whom the Lord our God shall call
 “ into the profession of this religion: the promise
 “ will respect *them* and *their children*, just as it does
 “ *you* and *yours*: All christians whether *profelyted*,
 “ and so brought nigh to God, or *born* under the
 “ dispensation, shall be separated to its honors and
 “ obligations by the rite of baptism.” (p. 14, 15.)

“ *And, says the inspired writer:*” Is that which
 follows, the language, or the sense of the language
 of inspiration? Such freedoms should be foreborne.
 “ *'Tis binding:*” What is? the divine promise? If
 that be your meaning, I ask, to *whom* is it binding?
 To *him* that made it? or to *them* that receive it?
 If you mean the *latter*, are *Infants* such? Will
 you say, that you restrain the binding influence of
 the divine promise, among *us*, to *profelytes*? This
 gives me but little satisfaction; because, I cannot
 understand you on that subject. You contend that
infants may be profelyted, and yet say, We have
 no profelytes here to make. Will you say, the pro-
 mise to which you refer, binds them *only* “ whom
 “ the Lord our God shall call into the profession of
 “ this,” (i. e. the christian) “ religion?” But this
 would be to contradict much that you have said in
 your *Defence of Infant Baptism*. “ The promise,”
 you

“ mean by this, that *the gospel* should be preached to *all*
 “ *the dispersed of Israel*, in distant nations: But *the Spirit*
 “ *of God*, might have a *farther view*.” See Dr Dod-
 deridge’s Family Expositor, in the Note d. on Acts ii. 39.
 Octavo Edit.

you say, "will respect *them*," the profelyted Gentiles, "and *their children*, just as it does *you* [Jews] "and *yours*." But, Sir, how had this promise any respect to the Jews? Was it applied to all without distinction? Was it of use to any that rejected him in whom all the promises of God are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God? 2 Cor. i. 20. "All christians, whether *profelyted*, and so brought nigh to God, or *born* under the dispensation, shall be seperated to its honors and obligations by the rite of baptism." To put these words in the mouth of Peter, and to inform the reader this is the language of the inspired writer, is displeasing. Was Peter ever wont to speak as you have made him? Did he ever say, All christians should be seperated to the honors of the christian dispensation by the rite of baptism? But what are your criterions of christianity? Why, whether they are *profelyted*, and so brought nigh to God, or *born* under the christian dispensation, which is the common lot of millions who are not brought nigh to God, they are alike to be seperated to the honors of christianity by the rite of baptism; you mean too, by the rite of *Infant* baptism. Is this the voice of *Peter*? Of *what* Peter? I am confident, it is not the language of *that* Peter who was an *Apostle* of Jesus Christ.

Regulate as you please the channel of divine compassion, God continues to say, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have

“ compassion on whom I will have compassion,
 “ Rom. ix. 15.” He still takes, “ One of a city,
 “ and two of a family.” He still asks, “ Was not
 “ Esau Jacob’s brother?” And when he speaketh
 of that favor which issues in salvation, he still assures
 us, “ The election hath obtained it, and the rest
 “ were blinded. Rom. xi. 7.” “ O the depth of
 “ the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of
 “ God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and
 “ his ways past finding out! For who hath known
 “ the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his
 “ his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him,
 “ and it shall be recompensed to him again? For
 “ of him, and through him, and to him are all
 “ things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.
 “ Rom. xi. 33—36.”

Before I quit the households of the saints, I wish
 you to observe, That though there is an *entire* silence
 with respect to *children* in the Acts of the Apostles,
 whenever the writer of that history treats of *baptism*,
 yet “ the writer of the *Acts*, is careful to make ex-
 “ press mention of *children* in an historical fact of
 “ *much less* consequence, when children were really
 “ a part of the company. Thus Acts xxi. 5. *They*
 “ *all brought us on our way, WITH WIVES AND*
 “ *CHILDREN, till we were out of the city.* We may
 “ observe in another instance or two, how carefully
 “ the *scripture* mentions *children*, when they are
 “ parties concerned. Matt. xiv. 21. *They that*
 “ *had eaten were about five thousand men, beside*
 “ WOMEN

“ WOMEN AND CHILDREN: [*παῖδες, little child-*
 “ *ren.*] And in the next chapter, which records
 “ another miracle of the like sort, Matt. xv. 38.
 “ *They that did eat were four thousand men, BESIDE*
 “ WOMEN AND CHILDREN: [*παῖδες, little child-*
 “ *ren, infants.*]”

“ These miracles, of feeding so many thousand
 “ men, from such scanty provision, would have
 “ been sufficiently great and illustrious, without
 “ the additional circumstance of *women and child-*
 “ *ren*: but as they were parties concerned, they are
 “ mentioned.”

“ And is it not a little strange,—that we *no where*
 “ find *children* mentioned, not *once* mentioned, if it
 “ were the Apostles custom to baptize *them* with their
 “ parents? These servants and Apostles of Christ,
 “ we have already observed, were no strangers to
 “ baptism *before* the death of their master. They
 “ knew it, and practised it in *John's* time. But to
 “ *whom* did they administer it? To the *adult only*:
 “ not to them *and their infants*. If afterwards they
 “ were to understand and practise this rite so *differ-*
 “ *ently* from what they had *just before* understood and
 “ practised; if they were to baptize, not only the
 “ professors of repentance and faith, but their off-
 “ spring too; may we not expect to find such dif-
 “ ference *expressed*, either in their Lord's commis-
 “ sion, or in the authentic account of their *practice*,
 “ who baptized in obedience to his command? But
 “ if neither Christ nor his Apostles have *declared*
 “ Infant

" Infant baptism, how shall we know it to be
 " their mind?" See a Course of Letters to Bp.
 Hoadly. P. 92, 93, 94.

Thus I quit, for the present, the households of
 the saints mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles:
 confirmed in my belief that those families were stran-
 gers to that practice which you labor to promote.
 As you take your leave of these families, you do it
 no less confirmed in your conjectures; you also do
 it by making this formal conclusion: " Upon the
 " whole, does it not appear, that, to baptize per-
 " sons, in our circumstances, at an ADULT age, is
 " without a SCRIPTURAL WARRANT; without a
 " SINGLE EXAMPLE in the Apostolic practice;
 " while, to baptize households or families, the pa-
 " rent or head of it being a christian, is an EXACT
 " AND LITERAL IMITATION OF THE CONDUCT
 " OF MEN DIVINELY INSPIRED? (P. 15.)

Let us lament the repeated and affecting instances
 we have of human weakness. I am carried by the
 evidence before us, with all the sincerity you can
 wish me to possess, to every different conclusion. I
 will express it more fully in a parody of yours.

Upon the whole then, does it not appear, that to
 baptize persons, in our circumstances, at an ADULT
 age, is with the WARRANT OF SCRIPTURE and
 with MANY EXAMPLES in the Apostles practice;
 seeing our circumstances have made no change either
 in the nature of the kingdom of Christ, or in the
 nature of gospel obedience? But does it appear,
 that

that to baptize households or families, the parent or head of it being a christian, is AN EXACT AND LITERAL IMITATION OF THE CONDUCT OF MEN DIVINELY INSPIRED? No : the reverse of this bold assertion, I flatter myself, I have proved in the preceding pages. I am, Sir, with undiminished respect for every thing in you that is respectable, notwithstanding these animadversions on your *Defence of Infant baptism*,

Your's in our Lord,

April 11, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

L E T.

L E T T E R VI.

REV. SIR.

WHEN the scene changes expectation is excited. Even those changes which we at length regret, do frequently, at first, produce a transient satisfaction. We now enter on a new topic. The *subjects* of baptism have been considered; we are now to consider what is the *mode*. But, Sir, permit me to observe, “ we run into a great mistake “ and *confusion* of language, when we talk of *sprinkling* and *immersion* as different *modes* of the *same thing*. *Modern custom* has reconciled us to this “ abuse of language; so that we do not stumble at “ the inconsistency, when we call sprinkling *baptism*. “ But he that shall confine himself unto the ideas “ conveyed by *scripture language*, will perceive that “ to call sprinkling a *mode of baptizing*, is to call “ sprinkling a mode of *bathing*, or of *washing the body in water*. ’Tis to confound two rites as intirely “ distinct, as were *washing the body*, and *shaving off the hair*, in the purification of a leper.” See a Course of Letters to Bp. Hoadly. P. 24, 25.

The following remarks, produced by the same Author, from two Dignitaries in the Church of England,

land, deserve our notice. See his *Course of Letters* P. 4, 5.

“ A *very few* years make a great alteration in
 “ mens notions, and language about such points of
 “ religion. And the distance of *many* years makes
 “ a still greater alteration; whilst men of various
 “ opinions, and strong imaginations, are continu-
 “ ally going on to comment and enlarge upon such
 “ subjects; the *New Testament* therefore, in this
 “ case, is *alone* to be depended on; from which we
 “ ought, with the greatest care and honesty, to take
 “ *all* our notions of this duty.” (Bp. Hoadly.)

“ In process of time, the best institutions are apt
 “ to *decline*, and by insensible degrees to swerve,
 “ and depart from the perfection of their first state;
 “ and therefore it is a good rule, to preserve things
 “ from corruption and degeneracy, often to look
 “ back to *the first institution*, and by that to correct
 “ those imperfections and errors which will almost
 “ unavoidably creep in with time.” (Abp. Till-
 “ otson.)

This part of the debate between us, you thus in-
 troduce. “ Allow me still to presume on your pa-
 “ tient attention, while, **THIRDLY**, I vindicate
 “ the *mode* of administering baptism by SPRINK-
 “ LING or POURING water on the subject.” (P. 15.)

An apology this, which you certainly ought to make
 to men of common understanding, who are versed
 in this debate. You are pleased to add, “ And I
 “ cannot but think, that very little may suffice for
 “ an

" an impartial intelligent hearer, on this part of " the subject." (P. 15.) I am sure, Sir, if a *very little* will not satisfy, such hearers, or such readers, they must be greatly disappointed.

But before I attend to your arguments in favor of " sprinkling, or pouring water on the subject," I wish to lay before you this general remark: That from the *beginning*, either the ordinance of baptism *was* so stated by John and by Jesus Christ, and by the Apostles of our Lord, that it was easy to be determined by following Administrators, in what manner it was to be administered, or it was not. And it is *now* so stated in the New Testament, or it is not. If it be not, whence, Sir, have you sufficient sagacity to give your vote and practice in favor of sprinkling? Farther; if this matter was not determined by proper authority, who can imagine that baptism, *in any form*, was meant to be *continued*? But if, by such authority, it was determined that baptism should be administered by *sprinkling*, can you account how this ordinance was ever corrupted by *immersion*? And remember, Sir, if this be a corruption, it has so been from the *commencement* of this positive institute *to this day*. The change from *immersion* to *sprinkling* is of easy investigation. It is only to consult *flesh* and *blood* to obtain a *decisive* answer. But had *sprinkling* been established by *divine* authority, and confirmed by the constant practice of the Apostles, it requires something more than all your ingenuity to account for the *antiquity* and

and *prevalence* of *immersion*, under all those *difficulties* and *discouragements* which so many have been *obliged* to surmount, who have endeavoured to obtain the testimony of a *good conscience* in their *personal* submission to this duty.

I will now consider your attempt to “vindicate
“the *mode* of administering baptism by SPRINK-
“LING OR POURING water on the subject.”

“The Greek word (*βαπτίζω*) which is used for
“baptizing, signifies, according to the best Lexico-
“graphers and Grammarians, not only to *dip* or
“*plunge* under water; but also, to *wash* or *wet* in
“any form.” (P. 15.) How are we to judge
whether the Grammarians you have in view be the
best or *second best*? You mention no names: you
quote no passage to confirm your assertion. If they
be, what you call them, the *best*, then it appears,
even from your concession, that the *best* Lexicogra-
phers and Grammarians do admit the *leading* sense
of the word *βαπτίζω*, is to *dip* or *plunge* in water.
And if it be, we are not at all affected with its
having, on some occasions, a softer signification.
Were the learned and laborious Authors whose nu-
merous and striking concessions Mr Booth has pro-
duced, on the meaning of the terms *Baptize* and
Baptism, unacquainted with the *primary*, *native* and
proper sense of those words? Yet no less than *fifty*
seven *Pædobaptists*, have been produced by him, as
bearing witness against their own practice and yours,
in giving their suffrages in support of the *leading*
sense

sense of those terms. See Mr Booth's *Pædobaptism Examined*, chap. 2. P. 16—28.

Mr Michaelis, has justly observed, "That a word has often several significations, and we choosing *that* which is not applicable to the subject in question, are *unawares* drawn into errors." See his *Dissertation on the Influence of Opinions on Language, and of Language on Opinions*. P. 20.

Leaving Lexicographers and Grammarians, you advance to higher authority. You appeal to the New Testament. What you are pleased to produce from that safe source of information shall not be overlooked.

"They practised, says the Apostle, *διαφοροις βαπτισμοις*, *different kinds* of baptisms; religious washings of various sorts, or in different forms. Now, if the inspired Apostle rightly understood this word, and uses it as an equivocal open term, including different kinds of washing, who can limit it to one particular sense, or mode of application, consistently with an impartial regard to the authority of scripture?" (P. 15, 16.) So you quote from Heb. ix 10, and so you argue from *two* words in that text. But let it be remembered, that the Apostle is there speaking of Jewish baptisms; and that, though they were *divers*, they were not *diverse*. Those baptisms were called *divers*, because of the different persons and things washed or dipped, as *Grotius* has observed; and not because of different sorts of washings, for there is but one way

" of

“ of washing, and that is by dipping ; what has a
 “ little water only sprinkled or poured on it, cannot
 “ be said to be washed ; the Jews had their sprink-
 “ lings, which were distinct from washings or bath-
 “ ings, which were always performed by immersion ;
 “ it is a rule, with them, that wherever in the law
 “ washing of the flesh, or of the clothes is menti-
 “ oned, it means nothing else than *מבילת כל הגוף*
 “ *the dipping of the whole body* in a laver—for if any
 “ man dips himself all over except the tip of his
 “ little finger, he is still in his uncleanness, accord-
 “ ing to them.” See Dr. Gill on Baptism, in his
 practical body of Divinity. P. 335, 336.

“ It may also deserve to be considered, whether there
 “ be in any part of the Bible any such religious cere-
 “ mony, as *sprinkling water* on the face ? If my read-
 “ ing does not deceive me, there does not appear in
 “ all the five books of *Moses* any rite of sprinkling
 “ *mere water*. “ There was a sprinkling of water mix-
 “ ed with blood, and of water mixed with the ashes
 “ of an heifer ; but I think no such thing as sprink-
 “ ling *simple water*. It is said, indeed, *Ezek .xxxvi. 25.*
 “ Then will I *sprinkle clean water* upon you, and ye
 “ shall be clean ; alluding, no doubt, to some wa-
 “ tery purification in the law of *Moses*. But I have
 “ not been able to find any Expositor, who could
 “ point out any ceremony of *unmixed water*, to
 “ which this refers. The only probable account I
 “ can find is, it refers to the *water of separation*,
 I “ Numb.

“ Numb. xix. called also *water*, simply; but this
 “ was really a *composition* of various ingredients, viz.
 “ the ashes of a burnt heifer, cedar wood, and hyssop,
 “ and scarlet, all mixed with the water. And in
 “ this case the unclean person was not only to be
 “ sprinkled with this *mixture*, two several days, but,
 “ moreover, there was *another* quite distinct rite to
 “ be performed, even a *baptism*, verse 19. And the
 “ clean person shall *sprinkle* [the water of separation]
 “ upon the unclean, on the third day, and on the
 “ seventh day. And on the seventh day he shall
 “ purify himself, and wash his clothes, and *bathe*
 “ *himself in water*. *Twice sprinkled*,—and after that
 “ *once baptized*.” See a Course of Letters to Bp.
 Hoadley. P. 31, 32.

If you are able to refute the remarks of this sensible and dispassionate Writer, so do. Till then, investigate, at your leisure, the divers *reasons* which made divers washings proper to the preceding œconomy, and permit us quietly to submit to that *One baptism* which Christ has *commanded*, and in which, he, himself, has given us also the light and influence of his *own example*.

“ Is any thing farther determined than this,” (you mean to say in the New Testament) “ that water
 “ should be applied to the subject in some form or
 “ other?” (P. 16.) Yes; and even Mr. Whitfield, whose ardour in the cause of Christ did not always permit him to be accurate, was of this opinion. In his sermon on Rom. vi. 3, 4. he says, “ It is cer-
 “ tain,

tain, that in the words of our text, there is an allusion to the *manner* of baptism, which was by *immersion*, which our own church *allows* and *insists* upon it, that children should be *immersed* in *water*, unless those that bring the children to be baptized assure the minister that they cannot bear the plunging."—See his Posthumous Sermons, taken verbatim in Short Hand, and faithfully transcribed, by Joseph Gurney. P. 297, 298.

If nothing farther be determined than you have supposed, then, washing the *feet*, or *elbow*, or as the custom is said to be in *Switzerland*, "to pour water on the *back* part of the head," might be sufficient. But would this give *you* satisfaction? If not any thing more be determined than you have supposed, why are believers said to be "*buried* with Christ by baptism?" and why is it said to be *alike figure* with the *ark* of Noah, "*wherein* few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water?" Care is taken, by Peter, to show that the believer's safety is by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: but in what *manner* baptism ought to be administered, and to *whom*, are abundantly evident to me, from this memorable passage. 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21, 22. May I not conclude, then, that a *little* more is determined in the New Testament concerning baptism than you are willing to *admit*? Is it not at *least* determined, that the proper subjects shall be applied *to the water*, and that water shall not be applied *to such subjects*? Acts viii. 38.

"The mode of use appears to me, to be only
 "the ceremonial part of a positive institute." (P. 16.)
 But, Sir, if there be any thing in your account of
 Infant baptism, which is not of a ceremonial com-
 plexion, I fear it will obtain, from some, a harsher
 name. You wish to countenance the present con-
 jecture from circumstances attending the Lord's Sup-
 per; such as "the time of the day, the number and
 "posture of communicants, the quality and quan-
 "tity of bread and wine." (P. 16.)

If these circumstances had been settled by the
 command of Jesus Christ, as immersion is, they
 would have been as binding on us as that. But if
 they are not thus settled, why are they produced as
 being of equal obligation? It is evident, so much
 bread and wine must be used at the Lord's Supper,
 that they who commemorate his death, in that sa-
 cred appointment, may each of them not only taste,
 but eat and drink with christian moderation. And
 it is equally evident to me, that when a believer is
 desirous of being baptized, under a conviction that
 the Lord has made it his duty, so much water is ef-
 fential to the due administration of that ordinance,
 as will suffice for the immersion of him who means
 to bow to the authority of his ascended Saviour. But
 with some, on this business, there is a continued
 conflict between the force of custom and the com-
 mand of Christ; and, I am sorry to say, that the
 former is frequently triumphant.

You

You observe, Sir, that in the institution of the Lord's Supper, "the quality of the bread, *unleavened*, and the unity of the loaf, *one* bread or loaf, are represented by the Apostle as significant of something *moral* in the receivers: viz. The sincerity of the communicants, and the unity of the church." (p. 16.) To confirm these remarks, you refer us to 1 Cor. v. 8. and 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

Perhaps, Sir, these passages have been *misunderstood*, and, consequently, *misapplied*. In the *first*, it is said, "Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

"As the passage is wholly figurative, styles Christ our passover, makes mention of his being sacrificed for us, and exhorts us to keep the feast in a particular manner; it may possibly, at first view, and while considered merely by itself, excite a confused suspicion that it relates to the Lord's Supper; and that it is founded on something in the nature of that rite, which we have not yet discovered. But if we consider it, as it stands connected with what goes before it, which is absolutely necessary to ascertain its true meaning, we shall be satisfactorily convinced, that the Lord's Supper is not so much as alluded to in it; and that it is not even capable of being applied to that rite."

" It is as if the Apostle had said, in direct and
 " plain terms, That Christ, who might very aptly
 " be styled the passover of Christians, had been
 " slain for them; and therefore, as the Jews, in
 " celebrating their deliverance by the Paschal Sup-
 " per, abstained from all unleavened bread, in obe-
 " dience to the injunction of the law of Moses;
 " so they, who professed themselves Christians, should
 " as it were celebrate their Redemption through
 " Christ, by abstaining from all sin and wicked-
 " ness, and practising sincere holiness and virtue,
 " agreeably to the precepts of the law of Christ.
 " This appears so manifestly the truth, and the
 " whole meaning of St Paul in this passage, that we
 " may venture to affirm, in exhorting the Corin-
 " thians *to keep the feast with the unleavened bread of*
 " *sincerity and truth*, it was their moral conduct in
 " their whole life and conversation, not their man-
 " ner of celebrating the Lord's Supper, that he
 " had his thoughts upon; and consequently, that
 " no intelligence concerning the nature and design
 " of the Lord's Supper, can possibly be derived from
 " this passage; since in reality that rite is not even
 " so much as alluded to in it." See Dr Bell's at-
 " tempt to ascertain and illustrate the Authority, Na-
 " ture and Design of the Lord's Supper. Appendix
 " Numb. IV. P. 101, 102, 108, 109.

The *other* passage to which you have referred us,
 reads thus: " The cup of blessing which we bless,
 " is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?
 " the

“ the bread which we break, is it not the commu-
 “ nion of the body of Christ? For we being ma-
 “ ny are one bread, and one body: for we are all
 “ partakers of that one bread.”

But let it be observed, that the Apostle “ exprefs-
 “ ly addreffes himself in this Epistle, not only to the
 “ Church of God which was at Corinth, but at the
 “ same time to all that in every place called upon the
 “ Name of Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. i. 2. And he af-
 “ firms, that because the bread partaken of by all
 “ universally is *one*, all are one body, since they all
 “ partake of the *one bread*. But it is by no means
 “ true, that the bread partaken of by all universally
 “ is *one loaf*; since in different places it always is,
 “ and even in the same place sometimes may be,
 “ taken from different loaves; and in different coun-
 “ tries the loaves may often consist of very different
 “ kinds of bread; and yet the rite is properly cele-
 “ brated, and all Christians become one body in the
 “ sense of St. Paul, by celebrating it, notwithstand-
 “ ing these differences.” See Dr. Bell’s Attempt,
 &c. Notes on P. 74. P. 163.

Your inference from your own remarks on the
 Lord’s Supper, seem to me incautious. For you
 say, “ Now, if we paid a strict regard to a single
 “ mode of applying water in baptism, while chris-
 “ tians are universally inattentive to those circum-
 “ stances in the other positive rite, should we not
 “ be manifestly inconsistent?” (P. 16.) But, are
 christians, or is the word of Christ, the rule of our

conduct in positive institutions? Ought we to follow *any man* farther than he follows Christ? Ought we even to follow *a multitude* to do evil? If christians were universally inattentive to any part of their duty in *one* ordinance, must we, to be consistent, be so in the *other*? Whither would this lead us? Whither, I am persuaded, your piety would not permit you to follow. But have you not sufficient penetration to perceive, that while you plead for *consistency*, you are *inconsistent*? Should you say, In what? I answer, in supposing that those circumstances which you mention in relation to the Lord's Supper, and the *manner* in which we are commanded to be baptized, are of the *same* nature.

But you ask, "Yea, are there not positive rites, " practised by Christ and his Apostles, which christians, who differ upon this point, agree to alter, " and even to reject?—Witness, anointing the sick " with oil, the holy kifs, washing the feet, and the " like." (P. 16.) But why again, are things *unlike* each other, considered as *similar*? You are much addicted to this mistake. Could we well distinguish things that differ, and call every thing, which has more names than one, by that name which is most significant and proper, how many disputes would subside! And others, which are not logomachial, would, by such precision, be much abridged.

You know, Sir, the holy kifs was a symbol of christian friendship: so was washing the feet of the saints: therefore, those acts, at any time, would
have

have been contemptible without a corresponding temper. Where that temper mutually subsists, and where those acts, in any particular situation, would indicate, unequivocally, christian friendship, and be so received, are they to this day forbidden? But where any act of this kind deviates from its rule; where it is either misunderstood, or would prove injurious, would it be friendly to perform it? Even in positive institutes, commanded alike, *to all nations*, and to continue to the end of the world, we cannot do any thing to another without his *own consent*. Is he baptized? It was at his own *request*. Is he received into a church of Christ? He sought *admission*. Has he a seat at the Lord's Table? It is in compliance with his own *inclination*.

As to anointing the sick with oil, this act seems to have been confined to the Elders of the Church. James v. 14, 15. and perhaps, it was still more confined. For, as in those days, *some* only had faith to be healed, Acts xiv. 9. so *others* had faith to heal as a *peculiar* gift, 1 Cor. xii. 9. which was sometimes done by anointing with oil. Mark vi. 13, 16, 18. To anoint the sick with oil, without faith to heal, was never the duty of any Elder. On the other hand, if any Elder now has faith to believe that a divine blessing will attend that act, let him make the trial, and do it in the name of the Lord.

It appears, however, from the text in James, that no common sickness was intended: but that some disorder was inflicted by the Lord as a chastisement
for

for iniquity. Such chastisements were predicted by Moses, Deut. xxviii. 15—22. And they are mentioned, as matters of fact, by our Lord, John v. 14. and by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 30. In the case mentioned by James, the penitent was to *send* for the Elders of the Church, and was no doubt, as a penitent, to speak before them that God might be justified, and be cleared in his judgment: because it is said, “ And the prayer of *faith* shall save the sick, “ and the *Lord* shall raise him up: and if he have “ committed *sins*, they shall be forgiven him.”

But you say, “ Thus circumstanced, then, I ask “ upon what principles, common to the followers “ of Jesus, could we justify a rigid attachment to “ any single mode of baptizing?” (P. 16, 17.) I fear, Sir, it will sound severe, yet I think I am almost warranted to ask, that if *two* and *two* make *four*, on what principles, which accord with common sense, could we justify this inference, that *two* and *one* make *four*, or that *two* and *two* make *five*?

I beg leave to add, to do what Christ has commanded, and to imitate his example, these are principles common to those that follow him; nor can any circumstance set them aside. It is not for want of common principles, nor for want of faith in those principles, in a *general* view, that we are divided in our practice in respect of baptism; but for want of a proper application of those principles, either by you, or me, to that subject which
is

is now in debate. You believe, Sir, as well as I, that you ought inflexibly to regard the commands of our Lord. You also believe, as well as I, that you ought to pay a due attention to his example. Even your attempt to accommodate the language of your Lord's Commission to Infant sprinkling, and so to explain his example, that it might not seem to stand in direct opposition to your own practice; this, though all your efforts are but labor in vain, supposes your admission of the principles I have mentioned. Let them be fairly applied, and our contention, I believe, will cease to our mutual satisfaction. I am, Sir, whether our dispute so ends, or it does not, your respectful

humble servant,

April 21, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

L E T.

L E T T E R VII.

REV. SIR.

AS I wish not merely to reply to your *Defence* of *Infant baptism*, but to touch the *core* of this controversy on each side, I would observe, that your *πρωτον* *Ψευδος*, or leading error, on what you call the *mode* of baptizing, seems to be this; *A supposed discretionary power in the Administrators of that ordinance, to accommodate that act as their prudence shall direct, and as circumstances shall make it expedient.* Wherein this differs, in principle, from that claim which you and I do not admit, "That **THE** " *CHURCH hath power to decree rites and ceremonies,* " *and authority in matters of faith,*" you will do well to **CONSIDER.** And how much your *Discourse*, in any part of it, is calculated to give us " *A new* " *Edition of CHRISTIANITY, with corrections and amendments,*" **REFLECT.**

The following question is very singular, "Are not " *sprinkling, pouring, and plunging, PERFECTLY* " *EQUIVALENT, EQUALLY VALID?*" (P. 17.) I have, Sir, had frequent occasion to remark, That as any person departs from the truth, or from a sense of the importance of gospel truth, what is now called catholicism.

tholicism, is commonly increased: That is, he will allow others to be *right*, that he may receive, in return for his civility, the same *compliment*. A man who writes against the Deity of the Son of God, will allow that we, who confess it, are *good* christians: and he who rejects the atonement of Christ, will allow, that we who joy in God through that atonement, are *good* christians. But he expects, in return for sentiments so liberal, that we should grant that he is not a *bad* one. The farther any man departs from those truths which are peculiar to the gospel, the more this kind of charity is extended. A Deist of the grossest kind, to whom annihilation is salvation, is more liberal, if to think a like of all religious sentiments be liberality, than, the greatest latitudinarian under any profession of revealed religion. May you be guarded against the first approaches of this growing evil!

Your charity, Sir, expands in the preceding quotation. But is it not in order to procure like charity from us? You admit, that *plunging* is *perfectly equivalent*, and *equally valid* with *sprinkling* and *pouring*: and can we be so uncharitable as not to admit, that *pouring* and *sprinkling* are *perfectly equivalent*, and *equally valid*, with immersion? I would, with all my heart, comply with your wish, if truth did not forbid it. But truth is unceremonious, and knows not how to yield. *Stubborn as Mordecai: inflexible as adamant*. We may bow to it: it will not bow to

us. We may speak it in love ; but love without the truth, neither tends to purity nor peace.

If, Sir, you *really* think sprinkling, pouring and plunging PERFECTLY EQUIVALENT, EQUALLY VALID, how is it you should think, “ that with regard to the mode of administering baptism by John, and Jesus Christ, the probability seems “ in favor of SPRINKLING and POURING, *not* “ plunging under water ? ” (P. 17.) How came you to say, that “ we never read of one person’s dipping another under the water ? (P. 17.) How is it that you presume John did not baptize by immersion at all ? (P. 20.) and that you have represented immersion to be either dangerous or indelicate ; to be harsh or terrifying ? (P. 20.) while on the contrary, you have told us that Infant sprinkling is “ easy and familiar ; ” (P. 12.) and, “ a mode which best agrees with the form in which “ the CHIEF BLESSING signified by baptism is promised ? ” (P. 20.) After saying all this, can you *really* believe that sprinkling, pouring and plunging, are PERFECTLY EQUIVALENT, EQUALLY VALID ?

If you expect to be believed you must be more consistent : for as we never believe any proposition which seems to us absurd, it should be remembered, that what we imagine to be inconsistent, we are disposed to reject : and whatsoever we reject, as not being true, is unpleasing ; because, to disbelieve any person, is either to impute folly to him whom we cannot credit, or to ourselves for disbelief of that which was so stated as to demand our assent.

I am sorry to dwell on a remark so unacceptable to you. But if you do not correct those contradictions which I have now noticed, either your integrity or intelligence, or at least your memory, will be suspected. Peradventure it was an oversight which led you into this error. And as I do not mean to charge you with *duplicity*, you will receive my animadversion, founded as it is, without offence: and I do not doubt but you will prevent, in future, the appearance of such incongruity.

In respect of immersion, Sir, “ it falls out very
 “ remarkably, that the *only two* words which the
 “ *Greek* of the *Old Testament* makes use of to ex-
 “ press the rite of washing the *whole body*, as distinct
 “ from *all other rites* of sprinkling, pouring, washing
 “ the hands and feet; *both* these words, and *only*
 “ *these*, are made use of in the *Greek* of the *New*
 “ *Testament*, to specify and determine, with *precisi-*
 “ *on*, the action of *baptizing*. So that if the Evan-
 “ gelists and Apostles had, on purpose, sought words
 “ which should *precisely express a bathing the whole*
 “ *body*, and *prevent* all enquiry whether they meant
 “ nothing *short* of it; they *could not possibly* have
 “ met with two fitter words than *λῶω* and * *βαπτίζω*.
 “ *Βαπτω* would hardly have done so well, because,
 “ borrowing their *Greek* from the *Old Testament*,
 “ this last word is never used there to express the
 “ rite

* The New Testament has also its compound *απολῶω*,
 Acts xxii. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 11.

“ rite of washing or dipping a person’s whole body.
 “ Let any learned person try to find out two *better*
 “ words, if he has a mind to exprefs *a washing of*
 “ *the whole body.*” See a Course of Letters to Bp.
 “ Hoadly. (P. 23, 24.

It appears, Sir, that you are willing to make this attempt. You say, “ If our Lord had designed to
 “ confine his followers to a particular mode, exclu-
 “ sive of all others, why did he use an open gene-
 “ ral term [*βαπτίζω*] and not a word decided and
 “ limited in its import?—The Greek language,
 “ would have furnished him with terms indisputably
 “ precise and exact ” (P. 17.) The Greek lan-
 guage, by competent judges, is said to be uncom-
 monly copious. I am not able to form, with pre-
 cision, a comparison betwixt it and our own. But,
 as far as I can judge, our language, at present, is
 nearly, if not altogether, as copious as the Greek :
 And I could quote respectable authorities in favor
 of this opinion. Yet, copious as our language is,
 and zealous as we baptists are supposed to be in
 defence of believer’s baptism, we always confine
 ourselves in administering that ordinance to the terms
 of our own translation. We never say, *I wash, I*
immerse, I dip, I plunge, I overwhelm thee, and so
 on : but, *I baptize*. Yet we are not under any ap-
 prehension, so long as the spectators have *eyes* and
ears, with *common* understanding, that they will mis-
 apprehend our meaning, or form a false conception
 what meaning we always intend to convey by the
 term

term baptize. If ever they find it difficult to determine what is the sense of this word, it must be when they hear what you preach, or see what you do, or read what you have written : or when they are thus attentive to the labours of some other pædobaptist. By such tuition, some may be so enamoured with that custom which is found convenient, as to imagine, that to *sprinkle* is to *baptize*. But was any man who never heard of this controversy at all, to read with reverence the New-Testament, without any wish but this, that he might find the truth and follow it, I have not any doubt but to that man every other book on this subject would be needless : he would need no exposition to inform him, that they who are taught, so taught as to *believe* in Christ, are to be *baptized*, that is, *immersed*, in water ; as the primitive believers were ; and that, it is the will of Jesus Christ, that this ordinance should be *thus* regarded, *in all nations*, to the end of the world

Further ; however copious the Greek language was when our Lord appeared as a teacher, meek and lowly in heart, was he, without just occasion, to depart from the terms and style of the *Septuagint* to instruct mankind ? Had he given us the sense of that ancient version of the Hebrew bible, in the unanimated didactic diction of Aristotle, or in the polished periods of Plato and Xenophon, would that have been more suited to his wisdom, or to our weakness ?

Mr. Parkhurst has made some remarks on the style of the New-Testament worthy, in my opinion, of your

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notice.

notice. He observes, “ That in the Apostolic age,
 “ *Greek* was the most universally spoken and un-
 “ derstood of any language upon earth: But that
 “ in all the *Eastern* parts of the world it had un-
 “ doubtedly received a strong tincture from the *He-*
 “ *brew* and *Oriental* tongues: and that the books of
 “ the New-Testament were written not only for
 “ the benefit of this, or that particular Church, or
 “ people, but of the whole world, both *Jews* and
 “ *Gentiles*. Such being, in the time of the Apostles
 “ the real state of the *Greek* language, and of man-
 “ kind in respect to it, and to the Evangelical writ-
 “ ings, we may defy the utmost wit and malice of
 “ the enemies of *God’s* Revelation to point out a
 “ wiser method of communicating *the scriptures* of
 “ the *New-Testament* to the *World*, than that which
 “ the Holy Spirit has actually employed, namely, by
 “ causing those divine Oracles to be penned in such a
 “ *Greek* style, which, at the same time, that it might
 “ *in general* be understood by every man who was ac-
 “ quainted with the *Greek* language, was peculiarly
 “ conformable to the idiom of the *Jews*, and of the
 “ *Eastern* nations: and the adorable propriety of this
 “ latter circumstance will appear still more evident, if
 “ we reflect that in the Apostles days the World, both
 “ *Jewish* and *Heathen*, had been for about 300 years
 “ in possession of the *Septuagint* Version of the Old
 “ Testament; the *Greek* of which Translation did like-
 “ wise greatly abound in *Hebrew* and *Oriental* forms
 “ of

“ of expression, many of which are adopted by the
“ Evangelical Writers.”

“ The Writers, therefore, of the New-Testa-
“ ment, or rather, (with reverence be it spoken)
“ the Holy-Spirit, whose Pen-men they were, wise-
“ ly chose, in expressing Evangelical notions, to
“ employ such *Greek* terms as had been long before
“ used for the same purposes by the *Greek* Transla-
“ tors of the Old Testament: And thus the *Sep-*
“ *tuagint* Version, however *imperfect* and *faulty* in
“ many particulars, became, in this respect, not to
“ the first age of the church only, but also to all
“ succeeding generations, the connecting link be-
“ tween the language of the Old and of the New-
“ Testament, and will be regarded in this view as
“ long as sound judgment and real learning shall
“ continue among men.” See the Preface to Mr.
Parkhurst’s *Greek and English Lexicon*. P. 6, 7.

Perhaps, Sir, these laboured and judicious re-
marks of Mr. Parkhurst, may guard you in future,
against a hasty and immature opinion of our Lord’s
use of any *Greek* word, which you imagine might
have been changed with advantage.

But what are the *Greek* words which you would
substitute for βαπτίζω? With reliance on the learned
for such a change, you say, “ Of this kind have
“ been reckoned, and I think properly, καταβυθίζω,
“ καταποντίζω, καταδύω or καταδυω, not to say δυπτω
“ and βυθίζω.” (P, 17.) which of these terms you
would prefer we can only guess. But this is not
material:

material : for where meaning made *visible* by *practice*, does not convey sufficient instruction, I am afraid the use of any term would be found ineffectual.

The subject before us is of a practical nature. And it ought to be recollected, that men have *eyes*, and will not be persuaded they are useless. When our Lord sat down with the twelve, and said, " This " do in remembrance of me," his *Example* was a *Comment* on the meaning of those words, and settled, with the impartial, the *sense* of that command. So they who saw John baptize, and they who read without prejudice, the narrative of Matthew on that subject, must know in what *manner* John performed that duty. The many Concessions which have been made by them who never *followed* his Example, warrant this assertion : And I have conversed with some *Deists* who treat the whole account as unworthy of a wise man's notice, who nevertheless, consider it is obvious, that John baptized by *immersion*.

Had I *seen* you officiate at Mr Bennet's meeting, you might have called your sprinkling of his child by any name you chose ; I should have returned with a clear idea of your action, and should have said, you did not *baptize* his son. But were you to be present, when I say to a believer, " I baptize thee, in " the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of " the Holy-Ghost ;" you would not hesitate to say, that I did not *sprinkle*, or *pour* water upon him. Now, as they who saw John, or Paul, or Philip, or any other Apostle, or Evangelist baptize, could have no doubt

doubt of the meaning of the word which they used, because the act which immediately followed, was the clearest comment on their *sense* of that term; and as their practice was *open, continued*, and always the *same*, there could be neither confusion nor obscurity, till after their decease, some ingenious *Innovator* wished to introduce, (for reasons best known to himself,) a practice more pleasing to flesh and blood. But here lay the *difficulty*: this was to be done under the sanction of the *original term*. For many are more tenacious of *Names* than *Things*. To effect the wished for change, what parts, what labour, what plausible, nay what pious pretences, have been employed! Yet after all, what *Concessions* have been made, and what *contradictions* have appeared!

Say, Sir, how is it, that we are exempted from such toil, and preserved, in treating on this subject, from those circuitous labyrinths which you are compelled to pursue? Adhering to the precepts and practice set before us in the New Testament, our account is short, and steadfast, and consistent: except, indeed, when you involve us in the briars and thorns of controversy. If so circumstanced, we are tedious, it is because we are constrained to follow the ingenious from conjecture to conjecture, from one custom to another custom, and through a long length of analogical reasoning that may well weary the patience of any common reader. If in these

Letters I exemplify the present assertion, your *ingenuity* must be my *apology*.

To the preposition *κατα*, the leading sense of which is, to *descend* or *come down*, you have annexed, in your two first words, the *Deep* and the *Sea*. And are these terms to be the substitute for *βαπτίζω*? You remind me of the words of Moses, which we have thus translated: “Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath *be cast into the sea*: his chosen captains also are *drowned* in the *Red Sea*. “The *depths* have covered them: they sank into “the *bottom* as a stone. *Exod. xv. 4, 5.*” Frightful ideas! Will not any thing softer give you satisfaction?

Καταδυω and *καταδω* produce the same sensations. Thanks be to God, our sins, all our sins, are cast into the *depths* of a different *sea*! *Micah vii. 19.* And must they who obtain *mercy* be baptized with *vengeance*?—As you mention *δυνω* and *βυθίζω* with a less degree of confidence, I should hope, on due reflection, you may be of opinion, that the word *βαπτίζω*, connected as you find it in the New Testament, is used with more propriety on this subject than you have hitherto imagined. If, however, your dissatisfaction should continue, and you should think proper to reply to these remarks, I intreat, that some *text* may be quoted, in which any word that you would adopt occurs. Moses and the Prophets, the Evangelists and Apostles, we know; but

but your appeal to the Greek language is vague, nor in the least likely to *settle* this dispute?

“ We never read of one person’s dipping another under the water.” (P. 17.) If you confine this assertion, as it should seem you do, to the Jewish church, what is that to us, whether it be true or not? And, on your own principle, what is it to you? For if the christian religion be as *new* as you would represent it, it seems natural to suppose, that the *positive* institutions of that dispensation, if any be admitted, should be as *new* as the rest. If you extend your assertion beyond the limits I have mentioned, all I shall say in answer is, fond as I am of reading, I will never read any more, if you can prove that I have never read of one person’s baptizing, or immersing another in water, in the *New Testament*.

“ Sprinkling and pouring water, was a ceremony “ in DAILY USE, and of DIVINE APPOINTMENT.” (P. 18.) When? By whom? To what end? Let me also ask, Was the water *mixed* or *unmixed*? and what has all this to do with the matter in debate? Much of your reasoning seems to me as inconclusive as if you were pleased to say, whatever may be asserted of a *triangle*, may also be asserted of a *square*.

“ ’Tis true, indeed, that John accommodated the “ multitude in a place where there were *many waters* * (υδαλα πολλα.) But, might not this be from “ considerations totally distinct from the mode of

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“ bap-

“ * υδαλα πολλα is only the *Hebraism* נִים רַבִּים.”

“ baptizing?” (P. 18.) It is not said, Sir, That John also was *feasting*, or that John also was *preaching*, but that John also was *baptizing* in Enon, near to Salim; because there was much water there: and it is expressly added, and they *came*, and were *baptized*. John iii. 23. Of these words, *they come*, you make a *multitude*. By what authority? It seems more probable that John’s popularity began to *decrease*. For his disciples came to him and said, “ Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and *all men come to him*.” John iii. 26.

The note of Dr Whitby on John iii. 23. is, for a Pædobaptist, very remarkable. He says, *Οτι υδατα πολλα ην εκεί*, “ *Because there was much water there*: In which their whole bodies might be *dipped*; for in this manner *only* was the Jewish baptism performed, by a *Descent* into the water, Acts viii. 38. and an *Ascent* out of it, ver. 39. and a *Burial* in it, Rom. vi. 3, 4. Col. ii. 12.”

I should imagine, Sir, you did not recollect this concession, and the ground on which it stands, when you gave way to the following trifling turn of mind. “ But, is it not expressly asserted, that many, at the time of baptizing, went *into*, and came up *out of the water*?” To this question, having, I presume, no better, you return this answer. “ True: but a school-boy knows, that the Greek particles so rendered, are very frequently translated *only to* and *from*; and, if so rendered in the places
“ refer-

“referred to, the argument for immersion is proportionably weakened.” P. 18.) To *weaken* the argument for immersion, would be a *strong* temptation to some *fo* to render the Greek particles where the word baptism occurs. But did our Translators, tho’ Pædobaptists, give way to that temptation? Or, did not they, nor Dr Whitby, possess a school boy’s knowledge on this subject? Substitute your change of particles, publish your *liberal* translation, and see if it will not be as unnoticed as others that have been so called. But you have no objection to our translation here. (P. 18) Then you might have omitted the preceding remark, and saved us who differ from you, the trouble of making a reply.

A young Lady who attended your Course of Lectures on Infant Baptism, at Northampton, wrote on that occasion, an ingenious Dialogue between a master and his servant. The servant had been perplexed by your learned labour, and sought relief from the assistance of his master. On the use of *Greek* prepositions, the master attempts to relieve his unlettered servant thus: “They who esteem
 “sprinkling a baptism, say, that the prepositions
 “*into* and *out of*, might have been translated *to* and
 “*from*. But I would ask such persons, supposing
 “the writers of the New Testament, intended by
 “baptizing, *immersion*, could they have made use
 “of words more proper to express their meaning?
 “but if they had intended *sprinkling*, could they
 “not have found other and better words? But,
 “suppose

“suppose the prepositions were translated *to* and
 “*from*, that would not absolutely determine that
 “they did not go *into* the water: for we may say,
 “with propriety, We went *to* such a place, if we
 “went *into* it. If I say, Last year, I went *to*
 “London: it is meant and understood, that I went
 “*into* London. If I bid you go *to* such a garden,
 “you understand that I mean you should go *into*
 “it: and if you tell me you have been *to* the gar-
 “den, I understand you have been *into* it: the
 “same may be said of the other preposition. But,
 “on the other hand, supposing the words are
 “more properly translated *into* and *out of*, they
 “will, by no means, convey the idea of *mere* sprink-
 “ling. For though I may properly say, I went
 “*to* London, if I went *into* it; yet it would be
 “false were I to say, I went *into* London, suppos-
 “ing I, who live at Northampton, went no fur-
 “ther than Islington: or for you to tell me you
 “went *into* the garden, if you only went up to the
 “garden gate.”

“They possibly might go into the water, and
 “come up out of it; yet does this prove that the
 “subjects baptized were plunged all under water?
 “Is not *that* circumstance perfectly distinct, and
 “entirely undetermined?” (P. 18.) What you
 here *grant*, and here *infer*, I have had occasion to no-
 tice, and to smile at, in a preceding Letter. As if
 you felt the weakness of your own inference, you
 immediately ask, “But then, why was a RIVER
 “made

“ made use of?” Or was this question asked only to introduce the strange conjecture of an ingenious Brother? which is, that a river was made use of for the sake of *running* water. “ The significant reason, stated by the late Reverend Mr. FLEMING, is to this effect — John was of the order of the Priests; and begun his public ministrations at thirty years of age, in conformity to the laws of the Priests. Now, ’tis clear, that the most important baptisms, or religious applications of water among the Jews, had been by SPRINKLING OR POURING: and, that, amongst the formalities attending the *water of separation* in particular, the Priest was obliged, by divine command, to regard this circumstance, that it was *running* water. Now, is it not supposable, that John, thus circumstanced in his intermediate dispensation, gradually declining from the Jewish System, and imperfectly anticipating the Christian, might pay attention to this circumstance in his manner of using baptismal water? (P. 18, 19.)

Now, is it not laughable, Brother Horsey, to see these *quaint* remarks dressed up by you, for the *entertainment*, I cannot say for the *edification*, of a numerous and respectable congregation?

Let a Priest of the house of Aaron, when he is to cleanse a leper, take two birds, and command one of them to be killed in an earthen vessel, *over* running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop,
and

and shall *dip them* and the living *bird*, in the *blood* of the bird that was killed *over* the running water. And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed *seven* times.—And he that is to be cleansed shall *wash* his *clothes*, and shave off all his hair, and *wash himself* in water, that he may be clean. Lev. xiv. 5—8. And now, if John the baptist, in his intermediate dispensation, does not see the propriety of going *into* Jordan to *sprinkle* with *running* water, in the name of the Lord, let him not be accounted a prophet indeed, or be received as the voice of him that crieth in the Wilderness.

I observe, Sir, you say, that the *Priest* was *obliged* to do what he did. If so, the *divine command* laid him under that obligation. And should any thing which is *not* commanded, in a *positive* institution, oblige us to obey? I would farther observe, that if, when the Jewish System gradually declined, and the Christian System was imperfectly anticipated; if in such a situation, John *might*, and *did* pay attention to ingenious conjecture, and go into Jordan, not to immerse, but for the sake of *running* water, what a progress in the science of conjecture, may we not expect when the christian System is *established*? Then, Sir, it seems there is no occasion to go to a *river* for *running* water; it may be brought from a river *running* through pipes; and still to preserve *analogy*, it may be taken up and *poured* into a basin; afterwards, the minister may *dip* his fingers, and sprinkle the

the child with *running* water; I mean, with water that runs from his *fingers* on the infants *face*.

What shall we say to this progressive improvement in the science of conjecture?—But you will *think* that I am ludicrous. Do not however *say* that, because, it is your own comment and practice that is here laughable, if any thing appear so in the conclusion of this Letter. The burlesque of Butler seldom wounds any who have not given too much occasion for such pointed censure. Let us do ourselves no harm, and, comparatively speaking, others can do us but little hurt. In belief of this fact, I am, with due respect,

your humble servant,

April 27, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

L E T.

L E T T E R VIII.

REV. SIR.

WITH what different perceptions and sensations do we read the same page, or the same paragraph. For instance, speaking of your ingenious friend, the Rev. Mr. Fleming, or rather of his fanciful construction of the conduct of John the baptist, you say, "There appears
 "surely in this account, to say the least of it, no-
 "thing forced or unnatural: and, whether the pro-
 "bability be allowed greater or less, there is cer-
 "tainly no proof that John practised immersion."
 (P. 19.) Your *surely* and *certainly*, are both of them
 by me, inadmissible: or in other words, without
 foundation. But in vindication of such conjectures,
who can tell a simple tale like you?

The tale is simply this. "He preached by a ri-
 "ver—to a multitude of hearers—in a hot climate
 "—dressed answerably to it—with sandals only on
 "their feet—and their baptism, when they went out
 "to hear him, an uncertainty.—As they hear, they
 "understand, and are baptized; how? *in* or *at* the
 "river Jordan: there is nothing decisive as to the
 "mode

“ mode. We must be determined in this by the
“ circumstances of the case.” (P. 19.)

Is this, Sir, simplicity? what then shall we call
sophistry? You remind me of Gay’s censure of cer-
tain Lawyers. He says,

“ Read o’er a will, was’t ever known

“ But you could make that will your own?”

Shall we thus treat the true simplicity of the *Sacred*
text? Your motto is, *Speaking the TRUTH in LOVE*.
Permit me to wish, you would *love the truth and*
peace. Zech. viii. 19.

They who came to John “ heard, understood and
were baptized.” They did so. And when you
baptize as he did, you will observe the same order.
But where were they baptized? “ *In or at the river*
Jordan.” What, cannot we yet tell whether they
whom John baptized, did so much as go *into* Jordan?
I thought, Sir, that had been admitted, when you
said, “ They possibly might go into the water ;” but
I did not recollect, that possibly *might*, implies they
possibly might *not*. But, in this doubtful situation,
in or at the river Jordan, what did John do when he
baptized them? Alas! “ there is nothing decisive as
“ to the mode. We must be determined by the
“ circumstances of the case.” I wish, Sir, this sim-
ple tale does not turn out a *sad* story. But let me,
with all the patience I now possess, be attentive to
those *circumstances* which you consider as *decisive*.

Thus

Thus they are introduced : " Observe then"—I will. Go on, Sir, I am all attention.

" On the one hand, the ceremony was performed in connection with a river ; the particle meaning sometimes *at*, and sometimes *in*." And what next ? " On the other hand, the number baptized appears to have been great ;" I do not wish to diminish the number. Whether you have not a poor motive in wishing to augment it, you know best. Have you any information how often John baptized in Jordan ? or, how many he baptized whenever he attended to that duty ? " Many of them " at a considerable distance from home." Whence did you obtain that knowledge ? In how many *places* in the river Jordan did John baptize ? Survey a map of Canaan, and observe the course of the Jordan from the lake of *Phiala* to the *Asphaltite* lake, you will then perceive that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, and of the region *round about* Jordan, had not so far to go as you seem to surmise. Jesus went much farther than they. For he came from *Galilee* to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. Mat. iii. 13. " Unexpectedly awakened." If so, does it follow, that they were unexpectedly baptized ? I have repeatedly gone out in the country, to baptize, at a considerable distance from my dwelling. Others have done the same. But we never went out at an *uncertainty*. And why should you imagine that John ever went out to baptize, not knowing whether any person was disposed to submit to that ordinance ?

ordinance? When you undertook a journey of *sixty-six miles* to *sprinkle an infant*, I apprehend you had assurance before you set out, that if you came up from *Northampton to Town*, you should not be disappointed. Curiosity might bring many to see John baptize: and that none of the curious was unexpectedly awakened in that situation, I will not affirm. But be it so. It was either found *proper*, or *improper*, to baptize them. If *proper*, your objection is of no force. If *improper*, can you prove that the baptism of such was not postponed? It is thus we act in similar circumstances. And can we doubt whether John who, though he was in the wilderness, was a prophet, yea and more than a prophet, can we pretend to doubt, whether he had common prudence to direct him in the discharge of his duty?

But, there is "no mention of any change of raiment;" which must have taken place if immersion was the mode." (P. 19, 20.) And can you imagine, there was the least occasion that we should be informed of this circumstance? How must the New Testament have been swelled in size, if every thing of this nature had been inserted? We read of no change of raiment when Philip baptized the Eunuch: but when Luke informs us, "They went down *both* into the water, *both* Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him:" we have no wish for farther information.

When Naaman the Syrian dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man

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of

of God, we do not read of any change of raiment; 2 Kings, vi. 14. nor in various instances of legal purification among the Jews, are we informed of that fact: I mean in such cases, where immersion was, beyond a doubt, a part of the ceremonial cleansing.

When I write to any person on this subject, I never make mention of any change of raiment. Why should I trifle in such a narrative? "On which side, then, lies the probability?" You mean, Sir, which is most probable, that John baptized by *immersion*, or by *sprinkling*? You shall speak *first*. "I presume, not by *immersion* at all." How then? Why, "that the multitude stood in ranks at the brink, or just within the edge of the river, while the Administrator **SPRINKLED** or **POURED** the *running* water upon them," (P. 20.)

And now, Sir, as it is my *turn* to speak, I shall venture to remind you of what Mr. Booth has said of a conclusion of Mr. Wesley's, so like your own, that if he deserved the following rebuke, you cannot think yourself much injured in the present application. "Mr. Wesley has given us a very fanciful and ludicrous representation indeed, of the administration of baptism by the venerable John. "For, speaking, of the multitudes who applied to him, he says,—It seems, therefore, that they stood in *ranks* on the edge of the river, and that John passing along, before them, *cast* water on their heads or or faces; by which means he might baptize many thousands in a day. See Mr. Wesley's

" Note,

“ Note, on Matt. iii. 6.—While I wonder at that
 “ *fertility* of invention which appears in this Note
 “ of the Annotator, I cannot but detest the *puerile*
 “ and farcical turn, which he has given to the con-
 “ duct of our Lord’s harbinger, when administer-
 “ ing a solemn ordinance of holy worship. If the
 “ credit of *sprinkling* cannot be supported without
 “ burlesquing the sacred history, and exposing one
 “ of the most exalted human characters to the ri-
 “ dicule of Infidels in this manner, it ought for ever
 “ to sink in oblivion. But what will not the love
 “ of hypothesis do, when cherished by such an
 “ expositor !” See Mr. Booth’s Pædobaptism Ex-
 amined. (P. 115.)

Some of your *deceifive circumstances* yet remain to
 be noticed. When “ John preached by a river, to
 “ a multitude of hearers, it was *in a hot climate*, and
 “ they were dressed answerably to it, with sandals
 “ on their feet.” (P. 19.) Was not Judea some-
 times *wet* and *cold*, as well as *dry* and *hot* ? In other
 words, had they not *winter* as well as *summer* ?
severe winters, as well as *sultry* seasons ?—They
 had. “ As the summers of the holy land are per-
 “ fectly dry, its winters are wet.—And accordingly,
 “ the Hebrew word *Choreph*, which we translate
 “ *winter*, seems rather precisely to mean the *wet*
 “ *season*. Their winters too are *very cold* and *se-*
 “ *vere*, at least in some years, and in some places.
 “ —He giveth his snow like wool, he scattereth
 “ the hoar frost like ashes, he casteth forth his ice
 “ like

“ like morsels: *who can stand before his cold?* Psal.
 “ cxlvii. 16, 17. King Jehoiakim is described as
 “ sitting in his *winter house*, in the ninth month,
 “ (which answers to the latter end of November
 “ and part of December,) *with a fire burning upon*
 “ *the hearth before him*, Jer. xxxvi. 22.—In the
 “ night of the eighth of *May*, the Sheik of Sephoury
 “ [a place in Galilee] made them a *fire* [Bp. Po-
 “ cocke and those who were with him] in a ruined
 “ little building, and *sent* them boiled milk, eggs
 “ and coffee: the fire therefore was not designed for
 “ the preparing their food, but for the *warming*
 “ them. No wonder then, that the people who
 “ went to Gethsemane, to apprehend our Lord,
 “ thought a fire of coals a considerable refreshment
 “ at the time of the *Passover*, which must have been
 “ earlier in the year than the 8th of *May*, though
 “ it might be *considerably later* than the 17th of
 “ *March*. See Observations on divers Passages of
 Scripture, Vol. 1. P. 13, 14, 16, 17, 25, 26.
 Edition the 2d.

When Christ predicted the destruction of Jeru-
 salem, he said, “ Pray ye that your *flight* be not in
 the *winter*. Matt. xxiv. 20.” But did he ever
 say to his disciples, Pray ye that ye may not be *bap-*
tized in winter? No, his commission extends to *all*
nations; there is neither period, nor place, nor sea-
 son of the year excepted. And, if Infants are im-
 mersed with safety in *Russia*, can immersion be very
 dangerous in *this country*? I hope, Sir, we shall
 hear

hear no more of a *hot* climate, of a dress answerable to it, and sandals only on their feet; unless you will inform us at what period, and in what particular place, the weather was so *hot*, and the people were so *wise*. I hope, too, these *circumstances* will never again be thrown into a *simple tale* to lessen our regard to an *exact* attention to the *command* of *Christ*; unless you can prove that John never baptized in Judea so early in the year as the 8th of *May*: But I believe the reverse of this is fact, and admits of the clearest proof.

Your exact acquaintance with all these circumstances, again reminds me of the ingenious Dialogue I have already mentioned; in which, the servant informs his master of your uncommon skill to discover what was done at the brink of Jordan when John baptized.—“ He made a description of John’s
 “ manner of baptizing, which would take up too
 “ much of your time, Sir, to repeat. He told us
 “ every circumstance, and how he managed, as
 “ clearly as if he had been there. I cannot think
 “ where he got his intelligence. I am sure, Sir,
 “ if you had heard him, you would have fancied
 “ you had stood on the brink of Jordan with John
 “ and all his disciples.”—May this smart, yet not severe rebuke, moderate your passion for conjecture; and warn you, when you *preach*, and when you *publish*, to distinguish between what may be surmised, and those facts, which admit of proper proof.

To be rich in fancy and poor in belief, at the same time, is no uncommon thing. You furnish us with an instance of the truth of this remark. For, immediately after your fanciful account of John's baptizing, at the brink, or just within the edge of the river, by sprinkling, or pouring running water upon them who stood in ranks before him, you add, "When too I am informed, that THREE THOUSAND" "were by Peter's sermon pricked to the [in their]" "heart, and added to the church, being baptized" "on the *same day*; such a croud of objections start" "up to view, if I suppose them all *plunged*, as" "quite staggers my belief," (P. 20.) Is it not as I have said? Fancy *rising*, and faith *reeling* at the same time? But *when* was you informed that these three thousand were baptized on the same day? On the same day they were *added* to the church, but does it therefore follow, they were, all of them, baptized in *one* day? Suppose this to be fact; yet how many were employed in administering that ordinance? Let this be settled as a remedy to relieve your weak belief. There were *twelve* Apostles, there were *seventy* Disciples, who had an equal right to baptize. Let us hope, if this great number was baptized on the *same day*, that most of them were present to grant their assistance. When the first temple was dedicated, it is said, "And Solomon offered a sacrifice" "of peace offerings, which he offered unto the" "LORD, *two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep.*" 1 Kings viii. 63.

Now,

Now, Sir, when you read this account, does a crowd of objections start up, so as quite to stagger your belief? "Not so." You will doubtless say, "For, I consider that *many* were employed, and "that all this was not done in *one* day." Be then as thoughtful in the business before us, and you will not stagger through *unbelief*.

But, after all, why start an objection which, if it has any force, militates as much against your *own* practice as *mine*. For, as but one person can be baptized at *once*; (I suppose you forgot this when you placed the people in *ranks* before John,) and as the *same* form of words must be used to *each* the time saved, by changing *immersion* for *sprinkling*, would be very little. Were you to see me baptize a proper subject, I think you would be obliged to confess, that I take up no more time in performing the act of immersion, than you did in sprinkling Master Bennet. Further; do you believe that the three thousand made a personal profession of their repentance and faith on the *same* day? Yet, as they had never received christian baptism *at all*, you admit that, this was *necessary*. (P. 6.) If then, their personal profession *preceded* the day of their being baptized, and if it took up more days than *one*, why should you suppose, that *equal* prudence was not manifested in *baptizing* these believers, as in receiving their *declarations*?

Your objections to immersion (though you admit it is perfectly equivalent, and equally valid, with sprinkling and pouring, (P. 17.) are thus continued:

"Is not the severity of immersion under all circumstances, and in all Countries, inconsistent with the mild genius of the christian religion?" (P. 20.)

Under all circumstances: what would you have your Reader imagine by these words? That we baptize persons in a *putrid fever*, or when having the *meazles*, or the *small-pox*? We know that God requires mercy and not sacrifice. But if any person, at any time, be so indisposed that he cannot, with safety, be baptized as the Lord has commanded; is it not better to *postpone* it till he can, or even for him to *die unbaptized*, than *first*, to alter this institution without any authority; *secondly*, to call such temerity prudence; and then, *thirdly*, to speak disrespectfully of the original appointment? *In all countries*. I ask, Is any country excepted in our Lord's commission? If any nation be, which is it?

But you represent immersion as "inconsistent with the mild genius of the christian religion." And yet, Sir, was ever any system of religion so contrary to flesh and blood, or to the corruption of the human heart? "Whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 27. Paul assures us, that he conferred not with flesh and blood, when he became a disciple of Jesus Christ. Gal. i. 15, 16.—You speak of immersion as "a form harsh and terrifying." But, do the advocates for pleasure, or the Valetudinarians, at the different watering places in Great Britain, give you much credit? Are not male and female, the delicate

delicate, as well as the robust, repeatedly immersed by choice? and even willing to pay for that pleasure, or for the advantage, which they expect? Nor is the feeblest infant always spared, if the physician, the parent, the midwife or the nurse, are pleased to say, that cold bathing will do it good.

But it “tends to shock our feelings.” (P. 20.) So did the divine order to circumcise the flesh of the foreskin. Some have been justly censured, because they contend, we ought not to credit any thing which even the Almighty asserts, unless it be *quite* level with our understandings. This censure you would not, I am persuaded, deserve. However, to darken our faith by the indulgence of fancy; to damp it, by the chill of a momentary sensation in our animal frame; if this deserves censure, how will you avoid it? So to act, ill becomes him, who should endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. From this delicate disposition, from this smooth, but barren path, may I ever turn without regret! He that pursues it, walks unenvied by me: though I must confess, his companions are more numerous, opulent and splendid, in this country, than those who walk with us.

Still you object, “Is not sprinkling or pouring water on the subject, a mode which best agrees with the form in which the CHIEF BLESSING signified by baptism is promised, viz. The baptism or effusion of the spirit?” (P. 20.) If Sir, no less than *fifty-six* Authors, *all* of them *Pædobaptists*, may
be

be heard on this question, " they are almost unani-
 " mous in considering baptism, as principally in-
 " tended, by the great Legislator, to represent the
 " *death, burial and resurrection* of Christ, the Sponsor
 " of his people ; their *communion with him* in those
 " momentous facts ; and their *interest in the bles-*
 " *sings* thence resulting. To confirm and illustrate
 " which, they agree in applying the declarations of
 " Paul, recorded in Rom. vi. 4. and Col. iii. 12.
 " Now, if such be the chief design of the ordinance ;
 " if these passages of holy writ be pertinently ap-
 " plied ; and if there be any correspondency be-
 " tween the sign and the things that are signified by
 " it ; immersion *must* be the mode of admini-
 " stration."

" Nay, supposing that our *cleansing from sin* by
 " the blood of Christ, were the first and principal
 " thing, intended and suggested by baptism ; yet
 " the same consequence would naturally follow.
 " For that purification must be either *partial* or
 " *complete*. Not the *former*, our opposers them-
 " selves being judges. It must, therefore, be the
 " *latter*. Of perfect purification, then, baptism is
 " either an *expressive emblem*, or it is *not*. If *not*,
 " why such a ritual service appointed, in prefer-
 " ence to any other that might have been chosen,
 " and would have exhibited the blessing in a far
 " more striking point of light ? To this reasoning
 " an excellent Pædobaptist Author gives attestation,
 " when he observes ; — That between an arbitrary
 " sign

“ sign and the thing signified, there may be an
 “ agreement, or similitude ; which is the *reason* of
 “ one sign being chosen, rather than another. And
 “ by how much the more a sign is fitted to excite
 “ certain thoughts, and to represent the thing *sig-*
 “ *nified* ; by so much the better, or more useful, it
 “ is. Whence it follows, that the illustration of
 “ an invisible thing, *depends on the LIKENESS there*
 “ *is, between the SIGN and the SPIRITUAL OBJECT*
 “ *to be represented in the mind.*” Stapferi Institut.
 Theolog. Polem. Tom. 1 Cap. III. § 1625.—“ If,
 “ in baptism, there is an *expressive emblem* of per-
 “ fect purification from sin, immersion *must* be the
 “ mode of administration ; because nothing short
 “ of that represents a *total washing*. I may here
 “ venture an appeal to the common sense of man-
 “ kind ; whether *pouring*, or sprinkling a little water
 “ on the *face*, or an *immersion* of the *whole body*, be
 “ better adapted to excite the idea of an intire
 “ cleansing.” See Mr. Booth’s Pædobaptism Ex-
 amined. P. 71, 72.

Words themselves, as well as acts, are signs of
 things, both visible and invisible. As then they ex-
 cite, or are the mean of exciting, in us, *just* ideas,
 and *corresponding* emotions, and of stimulating us
 to *proper* conduct, such is their real value. Now,
 will the word *sprinkling*, of which you are so fond,
 apply it to what you please ? will it excite the *same*
 idea as the word *immersion* ? And if these *two* words
 be applied to the *sufferings* of Christ, or to those
 blessings

blessings, or to that *duty*, which are connected with the sufferings of the Son of God, will *they* produce in us the *same* emotions? or the *same* behaviour? I will venture then to say, though you have said the contrary, that *sprinkling* and *immersion*, neither as words, nor acts, are *perfectly equivalent*.

“ John prophesied of Christ, he shall baptize
 “ you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Luke
 “ iii. 16. But when, and how was this accom-
 “ plished? By the Holy Ghost’s descending and
 “ sitting upon them in the form of cloven tongues
 “ of fire. Acts ii. 3. It is manifest, they were
 “ not PLUNGED in it; but it was POURED DOWN
 “ upon their heads. Yet John, (was he right think
 “ ye?) calls this, being BAPTIZED therewith. (P.21.)
 In Luke iii. 15, 16. we read, “ And as the peo-
 “ ple were in expectation, and all men mused in
 “ their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ
 “ or not: John answered, saying to them all, I
 “ indeed baptize you with water: but one mightier
 “ than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am
 “ not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you
 “ with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Now, it
 is obvious, that in these words, “ I indeed baptize
 “ you with (or in) water:” John speaks of baptism
literally, as it was administered by him: but in these
 words, “ He shall baptize you with (or in) the
 “ Holy Ghost, and with (or in) fire;” he speaks of
 baptism *figuratively*, or *allusively*. This figurative
 baptism was either a judgment or a mercy. If a
 judg-

judgment, or rather *that judgment* which was coming upon *Judea*, was that a *sprinkling* of God's indignation? Or, were not the *Jews immersed* in the deepest calamities? If *a mercy*, or *that mercy* to which you refer, are you right, think you, to give us so *partial* an account of that *blessing*? I read, Sir,

“ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come,
 “ they were all with one accord, *in one place*. And
 “ suddenly, there came a sound from heaven, *as of*
 “ a rushing mighty *wind*, and it *filled all the house*
 “ *where they were sitting*. And there appeared unto
 “ them cloven tongues, *like as of fire*, and it sat
 “ upon each of them. And they were all *filled with*
 “ the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other
 “ tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts ii. 1—4.

Observe, Sir, we read of *sound* and *wind*, as well as of *flame*: equally emblematical of the *gifts* and *operations* of the Holy Ghost. Further observe, they were in *one place*; and that place was *filled* with what is compared to a rushing mighty *wind*. Were they not, therefore, of *necessity*, as it were, *immersed*? Whether then, I attend to the *whole* of these *external* signs, or to the *internal* favor, (for they who were indulged with these signs, were also *filled* with the *Holy Ghost*,) I own, I should never have thought of *sprinkling* from this narrative, had not some ingenious Commentator suggested the idea. But what cannot human sagacity, when urged by the love of *hypothesis*, find out and infer? For, having
found

found out an analogy between "cloven tongues, like
 "as of fire," and drops of water, you infer, because
 those cloven tongues sat upon each of the Apostles,
 you may sprinkle running water on the faces of cer-
 tain Infants: and by so doing, you seem, in one place,
 to give Mr. Bennet some hope of spiritual blessings
 for his "dear Immortal:" (P. 25.) and yet, you give
 that very child no such expectation; teaching him
 to say, that this "rite by no means ascertains to the
 "subject SPIRITUAL and SAVING blessings." (P 4.)

"So, when Peter, and the attending Jews, saw
 "that the Holy Ghost, (πνεῦμα) fell on (καὶ ἐκχύλας
 "ἐν ταῖς ἰσθμ) and was poured out upon the Gentiles,
 "then remembered I, (says he) the word of the
 "Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized
 "with water, but ye shall be baptized with the
 "Holy Ghost." P. 21.) The extent, as well as
 the utility of this blessing, seems to be compared to
 copious and fruitful showers. "He shall come down
 "like showers upon the mown grass; as showers
 "that water the earth. Psal. lxxii. 6." So sang
 the Psalmist of Jesus Christ. But this descension of
 the Son of God, was to be enjoyed after his ascen-
 sion up on high, far above all heavens, that he
 might fill all things. Then he received gifts in
 men, and gave gifts to men, to the rebellious also,
 that the Lord God might dwell among them. Vid.
 Venema Comment. Psal. lxxii. 6, 7.

But is it not improper, Sir, to appeal to expres-
 sions merely allusive? and from a baptism confes-
 sedly

sedly *figurative*, to produce a standing rule for the administration of a plain and positive institution? The question between us is this, What is the *primary, natural and obvious* sense of the word *baptism*? If that be, not *pouring*, or *sprinkling*, but *immersion*, it is to no purpose to appeal to the *al-lusive* use of that term; though, in any other respect, it seemed to countenance what you labour so much to recommend. Now, that the *primary, natural and obvious* sense of the word *baptism*, is *immersion*, is not only *our* opinion, but the opinion of the most learned and pious *Pædobaptists* that ever existed, or that now exist. Not of a *few* only, but of *many*; not their *fleeting*, but *fixed* opinion; and published as such; even though those publications ill agreed with their own practice. I know not, therefore, whether any term in Theology is *better* explained, or of which it may be said, that its *leading, genuine* sense is *better* settled. How then, since you are not a stranger to these things, how then, could you ask this strange question? "Does it not appear, that the analogy is entirely lost by plunging, but compleatly preserved by pouring water on the subject?" (P. 22.) And, is it not still more strange, that this question should be asked by a Gentleman who very seldom *pours* water on the subject, but who, in *common*, if not *always*, complies with the current and convenient custom of *sprinkling*?

I
(p. 22)

I am now, Sir, in sight of the conclusion of your *Defence* of *Infant* baptism: and as it will bring me almost to the close of my intended *Answer*, I behold it with satisfaction. Otherwise, the manner in which you conclude your *Defence*, is too much like the preceding pages to give me *real* pleasure. Your final decision is, "On these and similar accounts I conclude, that IMMERSION UNDER WATER, is so far from being ESSENTIAL to christian baptism, that SPRINKLING or POURING water is EQUALLY VALID; yea, MORE SIGNIFICANT; and therefore TO BE PREFERRED." (p. 22.)

If, Sir, the words, "On these and similar accounts," should be unnoticed, or not duly considered, your *conclusion* may pass without *complaint*. But, if the *accounts*, to which you have referred us, be properly *investigated*, so far as I can judge, your conclusion will then appear *extravagant*: and the more so, when it is recollected, that though you *now* say, That *sprinkling*, or *pouring* water, is MORE SIGNIFICANT than *immersion*; and therefore TO BE PREFERRED; it is not *long since* you were of a different opinion; assuring us they were PERFECTLY EQUIVALENT. P. 17.)

"Many other considerations might be produced and other passages of Scripture cited, farther to illustrate the subject, or confirm what has been advanced; but I omit both, lest I should trespass on your time, and fatigue your patience." (P. 22.)

(P. 22.) This resolution was wise and kind. That you might have said something *more*, I am willing to admit; but, have I not just reason to conclude, you were conscious you could say nothing *better* on this controverted subject? On such an *occasion*, and in such a *place*, undoubtedly, you produced your *best*. And, I take it for granted, that they who heard you Lecture at Northampton, will find your most *plausible* conjectures, and your most *peremptory* conclusions, united in *this Discourse*. Of what weight your arguments are in this controversy, I have ventured to give you my opinion. It is not indeed, so *flattering* as the eulogiums of some of your friends; but perhaps, Sir, it may prove as *useful*. Whatever be its *effect*, as I have written without *unmanly* fear, and without pretence of *uncommon* candour, so I have written with *real* regard to your christian character: which I as *truly* revere, as I *reject* and *censure* those *errors* which I have made it my business, in these Letters, to *remark* and *refute*. But notwithstanding this, I meant to make it *manifest*, and I hope, I have, that in the bonds of the gospel, I am, with great *sincerity*, your's in our Lord,

April 30, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

M

L E T.

L E T T E R IX.

REV. SIR.

IT is not impossible to connect devotion with disputation. To build and to fight at the same time may be difficult: yet this difficulty has been surmounted. Neh. 4. And we are told, that Paul preached the gospel with *much* contention. 1 Thess. ii. 2. Your aim, therefore, to add devotion to argument is laudable. But, sir, our devotion ever is, as the principles are on which it is built. In your *Address*, your principles of devotion appear to me, to be mixed, and discordant. When truth animates your mind, and makes you glow with zeal, I read with satisfaction: and, I sincerely wish, that every truth which you communicated to your friends in that *Address*, may be followed with a great and lasting blessing! But sometimes you seem to trifle, and then I grow uneasy. Sometimes, you attempt to argue without argument; and your leading error leads you on to others, which tend, as I think, to disfigure the simplicity, and obscure the spirituality of Gospel worship.

In the *Address* a text was not expected. To move rather than to instruct, is commonly the design of the

the speaker on such occasions. But a sermon without a text does not seem so eligible. I am told, however, it is like enough to become fashionable. It may, for ought I know, be as much to edification as a Lecture on the Pilgrim's Progress. But I think a sermon without a text, or upon any text which is not taken from the word of God, is an encouragement of that levity, or unsteady temper, which we should not indulge. Without a text we may propose and discuss what propositions we please. It is true, we may do so if we take one: but with this difference; propositions founded on any passage of scripture, if properly founded, are more forcible than any other: and if they are founded improperly, such mistakes are more likely to be detected, and when they are so, to be avoided.

" You anticipate, but with great uncertainty, its " future character and lot." (P23). Thus you addressed your " dear friend and Brother," Mr. Bennet, and his aimable companion, in respect of their infant, then, baptized; and while each of them was in presence of a numerous congregation. " Is it an EMBRIO-ANGEL, or an EMBRIO-FIEND? (P.23.) Who could have thought, you would have wounded their ears by a question so useless, and so extravagant? I suppose, some poetic fragment suddenly seized your warm imagination: and in your fervour you forgot, that piety and poetry are not always united. Or was, this poetic start designed to make your hearers *feel* that you had a *deep* sense of the

propriety and excellence of infant baptism, considered, (to use a favourite phrase of your's) as a formal rite? Whatever was your design, you will at last be convinced, *that* may be tolerated as a sudden emotion, which, when *twice* printed, is in danger of exciting disgust.

Suppose a legacy was left by will to certain legatees, who are mentioned with precision; but, in a subsequent testament, they are not so much as named; would a claim founded on the first testament, either by quoting the words of that will, or by reasoning from them by analogy, would such a claim, either to property or privilege, be admitted? In applying this remark to our debate, let it not be thought either hard or strange, that there should be a *New Testament* which does not take that notice of infants, in respect of *external* rites and privileges, which the *former* did. "For the Priesthood being
" changed, there is made of *necessity*, a change also
" of the Law. Heb. vii. 12." Were the *Levitical* Priesthood, and that which is after the order of *Melchizedec*, the *same*, some of your arguments would be invincible: but they are *not* the *same*; they are *widely different*; a solution, therefore, of such arguments, is easy, and your inattention to this obvious fact, is much to be lamented: On any other subject you would not overlook it. But, "what saith the
" scripture? Cast out the bond woman, and her son:" yet he was the son of Abraham. They are, however, to be cast out of the Church; which is no
longer

longer national; nor is there any *regular* admittance into *it* by birth, or blood, or by the will of man: but only to them who are born of God: "for the son of the bond woman;" not any of her sons, "shall not be heir *with* the son of the free woman." "So then, brethren, we" who believe in Jesus Christ, "are *not* the children of the bond woman, but of the free". Gal. iv. 30, 31, "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of the promise." V. 28. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. 1 Pet. i. 23."— You will remember, Sir, that what I have adduced from Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, he calls "*an Allegory*," and applies it, himself, to the *two Covenants*. But, by the two covenants, I apprehend, two administrations of one and the same covenant, which were to take place in the world successively, are to be understood.

"Is it not decided, by the highest authority, that our Infants are included under the Messiah's administration?" (P. 23.) Why do you indulge such ambiguous expressions? What do you mean by the *highest* authority? by our infants? and by their being included, while *infants*, under the Messiah's *administration*?

"Suffer little children to come unto me." (P. 23.) But might not little children have been suffered to come to Jesus Christ, without drawing from that sufferance this inference, That the infants of certain

parents are therefore to be brought to the Servants of Christ to be baptized: i. e. to be sprinkled with running water? Had the Apostles, Sir, known as well as you do, that the Governor of the Christian Church had appointed infants to be baptized, by perpetuating a rite which had been in practice from time immemorial, and by determining its use in the evangelical dispensation, would they, with such light, and with half your zeal for infant sprinkling, have forbidden little children to come to Jesus Christ? Could you, on your own principles, have made the least objection? Had you been present, would not your expectation, on this occasion, have been anxious to have received a confirmation of the undoubted duty, and of the real importance of this formal rite? If you reply, "No, it would not: for I do not consider this text as *decisive*, or as containing a confirmation of my own practice."—Why then, is it thus produced? and produced too, when you suggest that Infant sprinkling is decided by the highest authority?

Every attempt to prove that Infants were baptized, either by Jesus Christ, or by any of his Apostles, proves abortive. And yet, from the death of John the Baptist, to the death of John the Evangelist, almost a hundred years elapsed. In this period, many, very many, were undoubtedly born of believing parents. And, as no instance can be produced that so much as *one* infant, among the *many*, were *baptized*, we must, we will say, that they who sprinkle infants,

fants, act not only without the *highest* authority, but without either *prescription*, or *precedent*, in that word which is the rule, the *only* rule, of religious duty. This silence, which you thought you could account for, (P. 5.) is to me, the more inexplicable, since, as we have observed, children, little children, are frequently mentioned in the New Testament, when they are parties concerned in certain transactions; and *once*, even in reference to the *abolished* rite of circumcision; for, we are told a report prevailed, that Paul taught the Jews to forsake Moses, saying, “that they ought not *to circumcise* “ *their children*, neither to walk after *the customs*. See Acts xxi. 21. Is it possible to suppose, that children would have been *expressly* mentioned on these occasions, and yet not *at all* mentioned in reference to their being *baptized*, if from the death of John the baptist, to the death of John the Evangelist, it had been usual and common to baptize them? There are as many kinds of silence, as causes of it. It is not simply silence, but such silence; silence so circumstanced, which ought to affect you on this subject.

“ Did pious Abraham accept the grant,” (you “ should say, comply with an *express* command) “ under the former constitution of divine truth and “ mercy? Did the faithful of old uniformly ap- “ ply the token of it?” I should say, Did they “ do what God *required* at their hands?—“ Let us “ tread in their steps, and use the christian circum-
M 4 “ cision,

“cision, the baptismal water, the only initiatory
 “rite to the kingdom of the *Messiah*, acknowledg-
 “ing and accepting the divine condescension and
 “mercy.” P. 23.) Remember, Sir, the christian
 circumcision is made *without hands*. So, indeed, is
 “baptismal water;” for, being unmixed water,
 it is the production and gift of God. But was
 “baptismal water” ever before called christian cir-
 cumcision?

Though we are willing to accept your invitation,
 to follow the faithful of old, yet as we attempt to
 tread in their steps, give us leave to judge what was
 peculiar to their dispensation, and what that is, which
 is peculiar to our own. Without such caution,
 we should unavoidably misapply general principles,
 which is a very common error; and instead of be-
 ing *evangelized*, we shall *Judaize*, or verge to some-
 thing which is *anti-evangelical*.

Many of the Jews, who believed, were zealous
 of the law: and it was with difficulty that those
 zealots could be persuaded, that God would call
 the Gentiles; or could approve, when they were
 called, that they should be considered no longer as
 strangers and foreigners, but as fellow-citizens with
 the saints, and of the household of God. For, those
 zealots still hoped to be distinguished from all people,
 and to *dwell alone*, and not to be reckoned among
the nations. And even when the middle wall of
 partition was irreparably thrown down, they con-
 tinued to discover an *improper* affection for their an-
 tient

tient ceremonies. By the spread of the gospel, they fancied that the *ceremonial* law would be every where observed; as far at least as it was then possible to regard the legal institutions. In this manner they manifested a disposition to make Jesus Christ a servant to *Moses*, and how unwilling they were to consider Moses as being nothing more than a servant of *Jesus Christ*. What they did by *design*, others did contrary to their intention: and I believe, that what you have written, tends more to lead your readers back to *Mount Sinai* than you could wish it should.

“ By baptism you surrender and dedicate your child to God. Yes.—To the adorable JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Spirit, I present, says each of you, this dear immortal: offering up my most affectionate wishes, and fervent prayers on its behalf.” (P. 24.) We sometimes say that to men, which we cannot say to God. When you lead your friends to the duty of supplication, you do not suppose that either of them will say, “ I present, O Lord, to Thee, this EMBRIO-ANGEL, or this EMBRIO-FIEND!” Exclamation may include, but supplicants will not suffer, such wild expressions: I mean, when they have a proper sense of the object of religious worship, and desire to obtain grace to serve God with reverence and with godly-fear.

After attempting to touch their feelings, by laying before them affecting, but probable prospects, respecting their child, you make Mr. Bennet say,

“ But

"But, surely, I may hope for his preservation." Why so? Because he is sprinkled? This sentiment, strange as it is, Mr. Bennet is made more fully to express, by saying,—“I pray—I hope too; “since the baptismal water is an emblem of his “[the spirit’s] purifying sanctifying influences.” (P. 25.) That hope, Sir, which rests on an *emblem*, is, to me, an ænigma I cannot solve. But, having assured us, that “This rite by no means “ascertains to the subject SPIRITUAL and SAVING “blessings,” (P. 4.) how, on this ground, can you encourage your friend to expect *those* blessings? The hope, then, which you are willing to connect with “baptismal water,” must, I imagine, have respect to temporal blessings: such as exemption from severe affliction and death. (P. 24.) Surely, Mr Bennet may hope his son will be preserved from these evils at least, now he is, in your way, baptized. But, surely, Brother Horsey, this is a very unguarded way of talking: nor am I alone of this opinion.

“Oh to have him baptized, not only with water “but the Holy Ghost!” (P. 25) This exclamation should have been inverted. Oh to have him baptized, with the Holy Ghost! and then, who could forbid *water* that he should not be baptized, as other believers have been, in the Name of the Lord?

In the following page, you have made some good remarks on parental duty; which Mr. Bennet, and others, will recollect with satisfaction. And you did well, at the close of these remarks, to remind
your

your friends of the propriety and importance of prayer in their attempts to regard relative obligations.

Your address to the young people, for their instruction and improvement, was not throughout, I think, maturely considered. You advise them, seriously to examine the grounds of this practice. (P. 27.) Should they so do, and, being thus exhorted, perhaps, some of them may, you will, probably, repent you ever gave them *this counsel*. For, perhaps, if they seriously examine the New Testament, in order to find a ground for infant sprinkling, they will be greatly disappointed: since they will not there be able to find any warrant for that ceremony; but, will probably perceive, that you have been compelled to defend it, by what is called *analogy*, and by multiplied *conjectures*.

"Your baptism was the act of your parents." (P. 28.) You ought, Sir, to know best; because, for my own part, I never saw an infant baptized since I was a boy. But I should have thought, that sprinkling was no more the act of the parents than their own. My apprehensions were, that the parents requested a proper Administrator to perform the ceremony, and, that he sprinkled the child without their assistance.

You inform the young people, however, that, "To communicate at the Lord's table is their own act." (P. 28.) Monsieur Le Clerc, I remember, speaks as if he thought it an infelicity that himself, and other Pædobaptists had no choice
in

in reference to their *baptism*: which he wishes his brethren to recollect, and to make the best use of, when they come to the Lord's table. He says, "Since Christ has appointed two signs or symbols of Christianity, Baptism and the Lord's Supper; it was not indeed *in our power*, to receive Baptism where we judged the Christian Religion to be *most pure*, because we were baptized *very young*; but since we do not come to the other sacrament till we are of *riper* age, we *may distinguish* that society of Christians, in which we are willing to be partakers of it; which if we have not *already* done, we ought to do it *now*." See Monsieur Le Clerc's Dissertation concerning the choice of our Opinion amongst the different Sects of Christians; at the close of Dr. Clarke's Edition of Grotius on the Truth of the Christian Religion. P. 312.

"To conclude, Let us all pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and for the propagation of religious truth." (P. 28.) AMEN! But let us also pray, we may perpetually recollect, that our present state is militant, within and without; and that peace, in war, cannot be expected, unless we war a good warfare. In the present state of things there must be oppositions and contentions, as well as heresies, that they who are approved may be made manifest; and that it may appear that such people act on principle and on sound conviction.

Truth and peace, Sir, are, at present, so much opposed, so frequently, and sometimes, so artfully,
that

that every man who wishes to promote peace by the propagation of truth, has continual need of faith and patience; of fortitude towards men, and of fervent prayer towards God. Thus supported, he may obtain a better proof of his sincerity and zeal, than if he walked on without attack from any, and lived and died without temptation, or ever meeting, either with affliction or with opposition.

Some, I believe, from a pious disposition, wish, if it were *possible*, to live peaceably with all men. These are sons of truth and peace: they shall be called the children of God. Others, cry peace, peace, when there is no peace: the peace which they would promote, requires not the propagation of religious truth: as that abounds, their peace expires. These people hate contention, because they cannot bear the shadow of contradiction. They, with all their pacific pretensions, will be found the enemies of truth and of real tranquility.

But you, Brother Horsley, conclude your *Address*, by connecting peace with truth; blessings these, which cannot be divided. I therefore said, and still say, AMEN!—May you have much of that peace which rules the heart; which subsists and cheers the mind of man, in his sharpest conflicts, and most painful contentions; and which, in various views, passes all understanding! May you ever love that truth on which this peace is founded; that truth which sets a *sinner* free from condemnation, and which makes a *believer*, close his complicated conflict

flit, and longest course, with joy! These, Sir, are the unfeigned requests of your opponent, whose rebukes were meant to be connected with real respect; and who is, with these declarations, whether this controversy with you be thus closed, or be yet continued, your fellow servant in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,

April 31, 1786.

JOHN MARTIN.

P O S T S C R I P T.

In respect of a word mis-spelled, a point misplaced, or a text misquoted, where sense and argument are not affected by them, I suppose, they will be as much beneath your notice, as such mistakes in your *Discourse* have been thought below mine. What is most likely to interrupt your attention, I have noticed, and beg leave here to correct.

Page 4. line 23. dele of. l. 30. for *seven*, read *nine*. p. 5. l. 13. instead of *for*, read *from*. p. 14. Note: add, *as it is now in common use*. p. 16. l. 11. for *those*, read *these*. p. 18. l. 29. for *Ψυδος*, read *Ψυδος*. p. 19. l. 30. for *principle*, read *principal*. p. 22. l. 17. for *disensation*, read *dispensation*. p. 25. l. 18. dele *That*. p. 33. l. 3. dele the period at *ad*. p. 42. l. 30. for *cristian*, read *christian*. p. 48. l. 25. for *legimate*, read *legitimate*. p. 49. l. 12. for *was*, read *were*. l. 13. for *credibie*, read *credible*. p. 74. l. 23. for *we are*, read *are we*. p. 88. Note: for *followed*, read *follow*. p. 91. Note: for *Quatieme*, read *Quartieme*. p. 97. l. 14. for *believer*, read *believer's*. p. 98. l. 12. for *as*, read *has*. p. 100. l. 4. for *υμων*, read *υμων*, and also in line 11. p. 106. l. 22. for *every*, read *a very*. p. 117. 18. for *paticular*, read *particular*. p. 120. l. 26. for *logomachial*, read *logomachical*. p. 123. l. 6. for *your*, read *our*. p. 136. l. 6. for *come*, read *came*. p. 146. l. 25. dele the comma at *speaking*. p. 153. l. 5. for *are*, r. *be*. p. 166. l. 29. for *were*, r. *was*.

F I N I S.



